United Nations S/PV.5879

# Security Council

Sixty-third year

*Provisional*

**5879**th meeting

Tuesday, 29 April 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

| | | |
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| *President:* | Mr. Kumalo | (South Africa) |
| *Members:* | Belgium | Mr. Verbeke |
| | Burkina Faso | Mr. Kafando |
| | China | Mr. Liu Zhenmin |
| | Costa Rica | Mr. Urbina |
| | Croatia | Mr. Skračić |
| | France | Mr. De Rivière |
| | Indonesia | Mr. Natalegawa |
| | Italy | Mr. Spatafora |
| | Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | Mr. Ettalhi |
| | Panama | Mr. Suescum |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Shcherbak |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Quarrey |
| | United States of America | Mr. Wolff |
| | Viet Nam | Mr. Le Luong Minh |

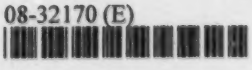
## Agenda

The situation in Somalia

Letter dated 24 April 2008 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/274)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-32170 (E)



*The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in Somalia**

**Letter dated 24 April 2008 from the Chairman of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) concerning Somalia addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2008/274)**

**The President**: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Somalia in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provision rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Mohamed (Somalia) took a seat at the Council table.*

**The President**: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/278, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland. Members of the Council also have before them future document S/2008/274, which contains a letter dated 24 April 2008 from the Chairman of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 751 (1992) transmitting the report of the Monitoring Group on Somalia.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear an objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour*:

Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Indonesia, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Panama, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

**The President**: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1811 (2008).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council will remain seized of the matter.

*The meeting rose at 10.15 a.m.*

United Nations S/PV.5880

# Security Council

Sixty-third year

*Provisional*

**5880**th meeting

Tuesday, 29 April 2008, 1.50 p.m.

New York

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *President*: | Mr. Kumalo | (South Africa) |
| *Members*: | Belgium | Mr. Roelants de Stappers |
| | Burkina Faso | Mr. Tiendrébéogo |
| | China | Mr. La Yifan |
| | Costa Rica | Mr. Urbina |
| | Croatia | Mr. Skračić |
| | France | Mr. De Rivière |
| | Indonesia | Mr. Natalegawa |
| | Italy | Mr. Spatafora |
| | Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | Mr. Dabbashi |
| | Panama | Ms. Jácome |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Safronkov |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. McKenzie Smith |
| | United States of America | Mr. McBride |
| | Viet Nam | Mr. Le Luong Minh |

## Agenda

The situation in Côte d'Ivoire

Sixteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2008/250)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-32274 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 1.50 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in Côte d'Ivoire**

**Sixteenth progress report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (S/2008/250)**

**The President**: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Côte d'Ivoire, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. Bailly (Côte d'Ivoire) took a seat at the Council table.*

**The President**: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council recalls that it endorsed the Ouagadougou Political Agreement as well as its supplementary agreements.

"The Security Council warmly welcomes the approval by the Ivorian authorities of the proposal from the Independent Electoral Commission to organize presidential elections on 30 November 2008. It underlines that this announcement, supported by all Ivorian parties, and the signing by President Laurent Gbagbo of related decrees, constitute an important step forward. The Security Council encourages the Ivorian parties to redouble their efforts to meet this commitment and the international community to bring continued support to this effect.

"The Security Council commends the Facilitator, President Blaise Compaore of Burkina Faso, for his continued efforts to support the peace process in Côte d'Ivoire, in particular through the Ouagadougou Political Agreement follow-up mechanisms. This support for the actions of President Laurent Gbagbo and Prime Minister Guillaume Soro, with the active engagement of Mr. Choi Young-Jin, Special Representative of the Secretary-General, has been instrumental towards achieving the establishment of a consensus among all political parties to hold presidential elections in 2008.

"The Security Council reaffirms its full support for the Special Representative of the Secretary-General in Côte d'Ivoire and recalls that he shall certify that all stages of the electoral process provide all the necessary guarantees for the holding of open, free, fair and transparent presidential and legislative elections in accordance with international standards, consistent with paragraph 9 of resolution 1795 (2008). It fully supports, in particular, the five-criteria framework elaborated by Mr. Choi Young-Jin in this regard and welcomed by the Ivorian parties.

"The Security Council welcomes the visit of the Secretary-General to Burkina Faso and Côte d'Ivoire from 22 to 24 April and is encouraged by the signing, under the auspices of the Secretary-General, of a Code of Good Conduct for elections by all political parties.

"The Security Council welcomes the Secretary-General's report dated 15 April 2008 (S/2008/250). It encourages the Ivorian parties to build on the ongoing mobile courts process for the identification of the Ivorian population and registration of voters. The Security Council looks forward to the publication of the electoral list as a crucial step in the electoral process.

"The Security Council calls upon the parties to make concrete progress to promote political and security stability, in particular in the context of the forthcoming presidential elections, in such key areas as the disarmament and dismantling of militias, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme, the storage of weapons, the unification and restructuring of defence and

security forces and the full restoration of State authority throughout the country.

"The Security Council takes note with appreciation of the support of bilateral and multilateral donors, in particular the Economic Community of West African States, the African Union and the European Union. It calls upon donors and the Government of Cote d'Ivoire to make further efforts to finance the electoral process, including through the trust fund established by the United Nations Development Programme to that effect, and calls upon the authorities of Côte d'Ivoire to engage fully with the donors. It also encourages the international community to enhance its financial support for the facilitation.

"The Security Council expresses its appreciation for the role played by the United Nations Operation in Côte d'Ivoire (UNOCI), supported by the French forces, in contributing to bring the security needed by the peace process and the logistical support required for the preparation of the elections. It welcomes the assessment made by the Secretary-General on the troop level of UNOCI in his report (S/2008/250). The Security Council will review by 30 July 2008 the mandates of UNOCI and the French forces which support it, as well as the level of troops of UNOCI, in accordance with paragraph 8 of resolution 1795 (2008).

"The Security Council requests the Secretary-General to keep it regularly informed of the situation, including on the logistical support that UNOCI will provide for the elections."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2008/11.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 2 p.m.*

United Nations S/PV.5881

# Security Council

Sixty-third year

*Provisional*

**5881**st meeting

Wednesday, 30 April 2008, 10 a.m.

New York

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *President*: | Mr. Kumalo | (South Africa) |
| *Members*: | Belgium | Mr. Belle |
| | Burkina Faso | Mr. Kafando |
| | China | Mr. Liu Zhenmin |
| | Costa Rica | Mr. Urbina |
| | Croatia | Mr. Jurica |
| | France | Mr. Ripert |
| | Indonesia | Mr. Natalegawa |
| | Italy | Mr. Mantovani |
| | Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | Mr. Ettalhi |
| | Panama | Mr. Soler Torrijos |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Churkin |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Ms. Pierce |
| | United States of America | Mr. DeLaurentis |
| | Viet Nam | Mr. Le Luong Minh |

## Agenda

Small arms

Report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/258)

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08-32354 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.15 a.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Small arms**

**Report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/258)**

**The President**: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Australia, Austria, Argentina, Benin, Brazil, Canada, Chile, Congo, Ecuador, Guatemala, Honduras, Iceland, Israel, Jamaica, Japan, Kazakhstan, Kenya, Lesotho, Liechtenstein, Malawi, Mexico, the Netherlands, Nigeria, Peru, the Philippines, Slovenia, Sri Lanka, Switzerland, Uganda and Uruguay, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.*

**The President**: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to Ms. Hannelore Hoppe, Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

It is so decided.

I invite Ms. Hoppe to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members have before them document S/2008/258, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on small arms.

At this meeting, the Security Council will hear a briefing by Ms. Hannelore Hoppe, Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

I now give the floor to Ms. Hannelore Hoppe.

**Ms. Hoppe**: It gives me great pleasure to introduce to the Security Council the report of the Secretary-General on small arms, contained in document S/2008/258, which is being submitted pursuant to the Security Council's request to the Secretary-General in document S/PRST/2007/24 to submit on a biennial basis, beginning in 2008, a report containing his analysis, observations and recommendations, as well as his observations on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The Security Council's open debate today once again underscores the importance that the Council attaches to this issue, which cuts across most of the issues that are on its agenda, be they the ongoing armed conflicts in various parts of the world, children in armed conflict, terrorism, drug trafficking, cross-border issues, the illegal exploitation of natural resources, or others. The threat to international peace and security posed by the uncontrolled trade in small arms and their excessive accumulation and proliferation cannot be overemphasized.

We have all witnessed how those weapons have been used to maim and kill, plunder and rape, instil fear and insecurity, block humanitarian aid, hold communities at ransom and destroy the social fabric of entire countries, and how their excessive accumulation and misuse have hindered stability and development in every way imaginable.

The report discusses various aspects of the issue of small arms, with an emphasis on the negative impact that illicit small arms have on security, human rights and social and economic development, in particular in areas of crisis and post-conflict situations. It also analyses global instruments of relevance in stemming the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms, including the United Nations Programme of Action.

In addressing the issue of small arms, the report places particular emphasis on fostering enhanced cooperation and assistance among national authorities; enhancing synergies between various bodies within the

United Nations involved in the issue, including the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission; exploring possibilities for further improving the monitoring of Security Council arms embargoes; developing forms of standardization of end-user certificates; drawing urgent attention to the destruction of surplus ammunition stockpiles and to stockpile management; encouraging the development of measurable goals for reducing armed violence; and building capacity for States that need it.

The report underscores the importance of developing practical exchanges between the Security Council and the General Assembly on stemming the illicit flows of arms and ammunition to areas of crisis and conflict. In this regard, the Secretary-General considers it promising that the Council has requested a report on the issue on a biennial basis following the same two-year cycle as that of the meetings held pursuant to the Programme of Action.

Furthermore, the report draws attention to the fact that the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms could be instrumental for the Security Council and for efforts undertaken in the framework of the Programme of Action, since it has opened the possibility for States to report on man-portable air defence systems and on small arms.

Finally, the report presents a total of 13 recommendations with respect to the negative effects of illicit small arms. Six of the recommendations directly address the Security Council, and it may wish to consider them, where it deems relevant to do so. The first of these is to encourage a strengthened cooperation between the Council's sanctions monitoring groups, peacekeeping missions, States and regional and international organizations. The second is to strengthen the synergies between the Council's arms embargoes and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration efforts. The third is to encourage States and peacekeeping missions to use the new International Tracing Instrument and INTERPOL's global police communication system. The fourth is to increasingly apply its practice of linking arms embargo exceptions with security sector reform. The final recommendation that directly addresses the Security Council is for the Council to encourage States to enhance their efforts to certify and standardize end-user certificates.

The Secretary-General is encouraged by the continued efforts of the Security Council to address the challenges posed by illicit small arms and light weapons in the context of matters under the Council's consideration. For his part, the Secretary-General is committed to further improving coordination within the United Nations system with a view to strengthening its actions on issues related to small arms. In this regard, he has identified reviving the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms (CASA) mechanism as one of his priorities in the field of disarmament this year.

It is my hope that this report will be helpful to the Council and that it will serve to facilitate the Council's further consideration of the issue of small arms. I also hope that today's meeting will enhance the determination of Member States to strengthen their implementation of the Programme of Action.

**The President**: In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to remind all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes — no more than five minutes — in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

I now give the floor to the representative of Burkina Faso.

**Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): My delegation welcomes the organization of this debate of the Security Council on small arms, the first of its type since 2006, on a subject which is of such key importance and thanks you, Mr. President, for having undertaken this initiative.

This question, as we are all well aware, is at the core of the Security Council's mandate, since efforts to contain the uncontrolled spread of light weapons today are fundamental to conflict prevention and the maintenance of international peace and security.

I would therefore like to thank Ms. Hannelore Hoppe for her comprehensive presentation of the Secretary-General's report.

The struggle to contain the proliferation of small arms is one of the most complex tasks and therefore one of the most difficult, because the need to save human lives, to maintain territorial integrity and the

stability of countries, to put an end to serious violations of human rights and to support development efforts puts it at odds with economic and trade interests.

The report of the Secretary-General clearly shows that the conflict between development and the spread of small arms is not an illusion, since security and economic and social development are so closely linked.

Faced with such a situation, efforts at strengthening the legal framework and cooperation at the national, regional and international levels must be stepped up.

In this regard, the United Nations has developed a programme of sustained action that has contributed to a better awareness of the magnitude of the phenomenon of the spread of small arms and to better organize initiatives designed to cope with it.

Here, we can cite, inter alia, the entry into force of the Protocol of the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime — the Palermo Convention — on firearms; the adoption of a Programme of Action in 2001 and of a decision of the General Assembly on the identification and tracing of small arms; and the regular evaluation of embargoes imposed by the Security Council.

However, these efforts have turned out to be insufficient to halt, let alone put an end to, the spread of small arms, which continue daily to claim victims, above all among civilian populations.

We therefore urge the United Nations to step up its efforts in this area by placing particular stress on concerted action, coherence and coordination, as stated in the relevant observations and recommendations of the Secretary-General.

It also seems important to us to highlight the subregional aspect in the struggle against illicit trafficking in small arms, given our view that all conflicts hold the potential of becoming subregional conflagrations.

West Africa, which is paying a heavy price as a result of the devastating effects of small arms, has established a legal and institutional framework to better combat this scourge, and has launched programmes for the collection and destruction of surplus stocks of small arms.

The United Nations, and specifically the Security Council, must support this kind of effort. In particular, the structures and missions of the Security Council must pay greater heed to these regional and subregional organizations, as was correctly emphasized in the 16 April debate in the Security Council.

Moreover, the regional offices of the United Nations and the representatives of the Secretary-General can also play a significant role in the field by supporting and assisting the efforts deployed.

Burkina Faso has subscribed to the Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, adopted in Bamako on 1 December 2000. It has also established a High Authority to control the import of weapons and their use and formed a national commission to combat the spread of light weapons. It has strengthened its national legislation and adapted it to the relevant regional and international instruments.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to underscore the following requirements which we believe are indispensable for an effective struggle against the spread of small arms. First, the international legal framework must be strengthened through the adoption of a legally binding international instrument on the subject of tracing and marking of small arms, which would also have provisions on brokering. Secondly, country capacity must be strengthened, particularly in the area of border control. Thirdly, all surplus stocks must be destroyed. Fourthly, international cooperation must be strengthened and synergy of action established among all the major players, including the regional and subregional organizations, INTERPOL and the World Customs Organization, among others. Finally, the Security Council must impose an embargo on small arms and light weapons and bring about increased vigilance in the verification of end-user certificates.

**Mr. Urbina** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, this debate is the last public meeting of the Security Council under South Africa's presidency as an elected member of the Security Council. I would like to start by paying tribute to your leadership and lucid conduct of the Council. You are a worthy representative of a country with high ethical values, the only one that has dismantled its entire nuclear arsenal, a State respected in Africa and the entire world.

For Costa Rica, to participate in a debate on any question related to arms reduction, whatever they may be, is a moral obligation. For sixty years now, my country has made disarmament a national cause and a priority of our foreign policy.

However, small arms still compromise the security of our communities. They have been and still are instruments of war in neighbouring countries and are objects of illicit trade for those who traffic in death. For this reason, we actively support the work that this Council has been doing on small arms since 1999. However, few aspects of the true process of civilization have encountered as many obstacles as has the regulation of the arms trade. Progress is slow, and it cannot be otherwise. As has occurred in other scourges of humanity, such as climate change, profit is an irrational stimulus and much more powerful than rationality in human beings.

Every day, there are more industrial plants in more countries devoted to arms production. Every day that goes by, illicit trafficking represents a larger percentage of the arms trade. Every year, the small arms and ammunitions manufactured and sold are sufficient to kill all of humanity twice over.

That is why we welcome the work of this Council. Around the table today are at least seven States that are among the biggest manufacturers of small arms in the world. Looking at the candidacies submitted, next year we could have nine of the major stakeholders in the small arms industry. No other intergovernmental forum brings together so much power nor has so many instruments for action as this Council. It is just a question of will.

In the nine years since the Security Council decided to address this issue, the international community has produced important instruments. Perhaps the most important among them is the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted in 2001. However, as the Secretary-General points out in his report, that framework has not generated all the necessary action, either nationally or regionally, to transform it into a more useful instrument. After the difficult process of adopting an international instrument of such nature and scope, we still need to overcome tremendous obstacles, as the biennial meetings of the Programme of Action and its review conference demonstrated.

The Secretary-General indeed points out that one of the reasons why there has not been progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action is the fact that it is not binding. That could be the fundamental barrier. In this area, rules are not binding for States and never become anything more than mere declarations of principle.

I would like to digress from the topic at hand to look at a parallel process, in which some members of the Council are working, which seeks to open a window of opportunity to work on binding instruments related to armaments. I am referring here to the Group of Experts appointed by the Secretary-General to examine the feasibility of a binding instrument to regulate the arms trade.

This initiative came about in 1995 when a group of Nobel Peace Laureates, led by the President of Costa Rica, launched the idea of an international code of conduct. That idea was taken up by the United Kingdom and a significant number of other countries and non-governmental organizations, who converted it into a resolution of the General Assembly at its sixtieth session. We hope that with the passage of time and intensification of the endeavours of all of us who believe in the need to effectively regulate the arms trade, we will succeed in making the international instruments in this area binding.

Just for a moment, I would like to focus on the report of the Secretary-General. Costa Rica agrees with the priority granted to the reactivation of the coordination of this Organization's action on small arms and to the strengthening of exchanges between the General Assembly and the Security Council on containing the illicit flows of arms to zones of crisis and conflict.

We are also grateful for and support the recommendations in the report, three of which we consider are the primary responsibility of the Security Council. First, the question of small arms and light weapons must be incorporated in the mandates and reports of the political, the peacekeeping and peacebuilding missions. Secondly, in the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes, the component relating to disarmament and destruction of weapons stocks must be strengthened. Thirdly, monitoring mechanisms must be revitalized and Security Council sanctions imposed, in particular with regard to arms embargoes.

These are clear responsibilities of the Council, to which my delegation would like to contribute.

**Mr. Ettalhi** (Libyan Arab Jamahiriya ) (*spoke in Arabic*): Allow me at the outset to thank you, Mr. President, for having convened this important meeting. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on the subject. In addition, I also wish to thank Mrs. Hannalore Hoppe, Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for her briefing this morning.

Today, the Security Council is discussing the subject of small arms and light weapons and illicit arms, as it has for eight consecutive years. This shows the interest that the Council has manifested in this issue, an issue linked to international peace, security and stability. Indeed, those weapons stir up conflicts and have negative repercussions on development in all regions of the world, in particular on the African continent. The most recent studies have, in fact, shown that the cost of armed conflict in Africa is currently exceeding $18 billion. This indeed is a considerable cost to the continent.

We are deeply concerned by the continued annual production of huge amounts of small arms. According to the report of the Secretary-General, more than 1,000 firms are manufacturing those arms in more than 100 United Nations Member States. The number of small arms produced annually is estimated at about 7.5 million units, a figure which, we believe exceeds States' needs for legitimate self-defence and prompts us to wonder about this surplus of weapons and the responsibility of arms-producing countries in the illicit spread of small arms.

Prohibiting the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons would have beneficial results: it would halt armed conflict and stop terrorism and organized crime. These are factors that could ensure stability in the developing world. As was stated by the representative of Costa Rica, this is first and foremost a question of political will on the part of States.

While we are grateful to the Security Council for having dealt with the question of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons within the framework of its mandate to maintain international peace and security, we need to take into account the broader dimensions of the issue. What is needed is to promote synergy among the various bodies concerned, in particular the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission, as noted by the Secretary-General in his recommendations. Member States should cooperate and collaborate in order to deal with this issue.

Libya believes that the ability of the United Nations to deal successfully with the risks involved in small arms and light weapons hinges on consensus — on the consideration of the implementation of the Programme of Action on Small Arms, which the General Assembly adopted in 2001 by consensus. The Programme of Action includes numerous important measures and is underpinned by a number of principles, which provide a legal and legitimate basis for it, such as the right of States to self-defence, the right of all peoples to self-determination and the right of peoples under occupation to resist. Thus, we all need to cooperate and show the necessary political will to ensure the success of the review conference on the implementation of the Programme of Action to be held in July of this year.

Libya supports all initiatives aimed at ensuring the tracing and marking of illicit small arms and light weapons to ensure credibility and verifiability. We therefore support the adoption by the General Assembly in December 2005 of an international instrument to this end. Although that instrument is non-binding, it is our hope that member States will implement all of its provisions.

Cooperation among States in the area of tracing illicit small arms and light weapons is vital to success here. My country complies with international marking standards in order to make clear both the country that produces the weapons and the country to which they are being exported. Appropriate and strict control measures and national laws are being implemented in a regulated framework to govern the use of arms by the competent authorities. This is our contribution to deal with illicit trafficking in these weapons.

At the regional level, coordination among Arab States is exercised through regular meetings of the focal points in charge of identification and tracing of small arms and light weapons, to ensure an exchange of data and experience and to analyse regional and international developments related to this issue. The secretariat of the League of Arab States is also a depositary of the texts of laws and regulations on small arms, which become a data base that makes full use of the capacity of the States in the region.

Accordingly, our delegation supports the recommendation of the Secretary-General encouraging States to collect, maintain and share data on small arms. Combating the proliferation of small arms requires that we pool our efforts and engage in coordination at the bilateral, regional and international levels.

Finally, it is our hope that the international community will be able to implement international priorities with respect to disarmament, nuclear disarmament and the destruction of weapons of mass destruction and to the regulation of the genuine root causes of armed conflict.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Viet Nam.

**Mr. Le Luong Minh** (Viet Nam): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate of the Security Council, and congratulate you and South Africa on the leadership you have shown in guiding the work of the Council for this month. I also thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2008/258) and the Director for her introduction.

Viet Nam is convinced that general and complete disarmament constitutes a solid guarantee for world peace and security and that the illicit trade in small arms can strain relations between States, fuelling and increasing violent disturbances, especially transnational crimes and civil wars, each causing much suffering to human beings. Viet Nam therefore realizes the need for the international community to strengthen cooperation against the illicit trade and proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

I wish to reaffirm Viet Nam's support for the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Recent reviews show that remarkable efforts have been made by countries in different parts of the world, resulting in the enhanced awareness of the need for effective control of such illicit activities and the birth of mechanisms supporting implementation of this Programme of Action.

In the light of the fact that much remains to be done in the context of the many prolonged conflicts and the growing threats of transnational crimes and terrorism, the United Nations must be supported in continuing its central role in promoting and sustaining international cooperation. We share the view of the Secretary-General that, within the United Nations, coordination on the issue of small arms could benefit from further improvement. We look forward to studying specific proposals to this end, including those aimed at promoting exchanges between the Security Council and the General Assembly on the issue.

We commend the Secretary-General for the comprehensiveness of his report and are of the view that the recommendations contained therein relating to a wide range of activities of the United Nations, the Security Council and Member States deserve and require careful consideration. Viet Nam reaffirms its view that the establishment, deployment and extension of peace-keeping missions and the expansion of their mandates must be with the consent of all parties concerned, must respect the independence, sovereignty, territorial integrity of States and the principle of non-interference in their internal affairs, and must be considered on a case-by-case basis.

Viet Nam supports the role of the Security Council in the inclusion of United Nations arms embargoes monitoring functions in the mandates of United Nations peacekeeping missions, as outlined in recommendation 5. However, we consider it necessary to further study the feasibility of the development of quantitative indicators for the area of small arms with a view to their being used as a base against which to set measurable goals and a 2015 deadline for that work to be done, as mentioned in recommendation 2. Discussions within the framework of the General Assembly and the Council in recent years have shown that there are still different views among Member States and that an early consensus is unlikely.

We concur with the view of the Secretary-General that Member States remain central providers of security and that that is their sovereign right and responsibility. The production, importation and retention of small arms and light weapons in particular and of conventional weapons in general for the purpose of national defence and security remain the legitimate right of every sovereign State, recognized by international conventions. International cooperation in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and preventing them from falling into the hands of members of organized crime and terrorists is necessary, but it must be in accordance with the principles of international law and the Charter of the United Nations, and it must not affect that legitimate right of States.

Viet Nam is fully committed to implementing the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. Since the submission of its report on the implementation of the Programme of Action in 2006, Viet Nam has been taking various steps at the national, regional and international levels to effectively implement the Programme. To date, no incidents of illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons from or into Viet Nam have been discovered; the number of criminal cases in which small arms and light weapons are used has been minimized. The safety of the people is ensured; small arms and light weapons manufactured domestically are closely managed and properly marked, in accordance with the Government's regulations.

We pledge to continue to work with all Member States to promote international cooperation in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and to promote the implementation of the Programme of Action.

**Mr. Soler Torrijos** (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on having convened this debate on the issue of small arms.

In a world facing the problems of insecurity, hunger and disease, small arms and light weapons are immediate and inexcusable aggravating factors. When we hear about "small arms", the term makes us unconsciously reduce the threat that they represent. Portable weapons, ranging from revolvers to antipersonnel mines, cause between 60 and 90 per cent of the deaths that occur in conflict areas. A great part of the cost in lives is borne by children and non-combatants. Many others are uprooted from their homes and lands.

Wherever we look, the consequences of these small arms are devastating and more lethal than those of other weapon systems; that is why they have been characterized as true weapons of mass destruction. The lack of reliable information, including on the legitimate small arms trade, represents an important challenge to reducing their lethal effects. According to the Small Arms Survey, we know more about statistics and transfers concerning nuclear, chemical and conventional arms than about small arms.

The economic, social and human costs of this problem are undoubtedly greater than the economic gains from the production and sale of these weapons for countries and companies engaged in that industry. The resources used to alleviate the harmful effects of small arms use up scarce commodities that could otherwise be allocated to other economic, social and cultural development projects.

It is appropriately and timely that the Security Council face up to the moral imperative presented by this situation and put an end to this lethal scourge. There are various initiatives that we can consider.

First of all, in the report before us today (S/2008/258), the Secretary-General makes several recommendations that directly concern the work and the mandate of the Security Council. The Council could form an ad hoc working group to study those recommendations. The group could examine other issues, such as the best way to correct the defects in the Programme of Action relevant to the Council's mandate. We could use as a guide the regimes governing the trade in chemical precursors for narcotics and materials for other weapons of mass destruction. With the same resolve, we could promote — and make binding — systems to regulate the production, trade and transfer of small arms.

The Secretary-General informs us that activities related to the illicit trade in small arms have resulted in violations of all the arms embargoes imposed by the Council. That is why we must, in consultations or in the Council's subsidiary organs, examine issues related to the small arms trade whenever we review the implementation of arms embargo regimes and the mandates of peacekeeping missions.

As we are debating here, thousands of victims are dying throughout the world under fire from licensed, illegal or smuggled weapons. Today's debate should serve as a platform that spurs us towards new decisive initiatives to combat the worst effects of the use of small arms.

**Mr. Jurica** (Croatia): First of all, I would like to thank Ms. Hannelore Hoppe, Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for her exhaustive and informative briefing to the Security Council.

The uncontrolled spread of small arms continues to pose serious problems for human security, development and the protection of human rights around the world. There is an urgent need for the international

community to show courage and unity in addressing this critical issue. In that context, we welcome the continuing efforts of the Security Council aimed at addressing the issue of small arms.

One of the major problems that all post-conflict countries face is the problem of accumulated small arms and light weapons, which can pose a threat to internal and regional security. I would like to stress the importance of this topic and to express our willingness to significantly contribute to addressing it, since Croatia has extensive experience in tackling problems associated with small arms in a post-conflict society.

We regard the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects as a key foundation for the strengthening of global, regional and national actions on the control of small arms and light weapons.

The upcoming biennial meeting to consider national, regional and global implementation of the Programme of Action, to be held in July this year, is of particular importance, and Croatia supports the approach of having in-depth discussions on a limited number of issues. One of the items on the agenda at the meeting will be the consideration of the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument, which was adopted in 2005. Croatia sees that instrument as an important tool at the disposal of the international community for countering the illicit trade in small arms.

My country supported the resolution calling for the establishment of a task force to prepare an arms trade treaty and thereby supporting international efforts for more effective arms control. Aware of the threat posed by the uncontrolled arms trade, particularly in the light of the effects of war on a society in general, Croatia would support a universal legally binding instrument to regulate the conventional arms trade in all its aspects. In that regard, we welcome the beginning of the work of the Group of Governmental Experts, which held its first session in February this year.

Other efforts aimed at increased international cooperation in the field of small arms are also of great value. In that context, we would like to mention the work that has been done within the framework of the Group of Governmental Experts to consider further steps to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We attach great importance to the work being done in that Group to consider further steps to enhance cooperation with regard to the issue of surplus conventional ammunition stockpiles.

In the field of the international cooperation at the global level, we would like to note the increasing relevance for small arms of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

At the regional level, we would like to register our support for the many efforts aimed at curbing the proliferation of small arms in South-East Europe. For its part, my country is host to one of the most successful Stability Pact projects, which is playing an important role in this effort: the Regional Arms Control Verification and Implementation Assistance Centre (RACVIAC), located near Zagreb. RACVIAC is helping to define new strategic goals in South-East Europe, which include, among other things, those related to issues such as conventional arms control, enhanced confidence-building measures and strengthening stability and cooperation in South-East Europe, combating terrorism and the non-proliferation of weapons of mass destruction, as well as the fight against organized crime. One concrete example on small arms was the Conference on Firearms Control Initiatives in South-East Europe, held at RACVIAC on 23 and 24 April 2008.

With regard to Security Council arms embargoes, we are of the opinion that they are powerful tools that can help us address the illicit trade and brokering in small arms. We call upon Member States to respect and fully enforce existing arms embargoes. In that respect, Croatia shares the view of the Secretary-General on the increased potential of arms embargoes as a part of post-conflict peacebuilding.

In conclusion, my delegation would like to reiterate its call for continued and increased international cooperation with a view to efficiently addressing the illicit trafficking of small arms. Croatia is ready to support such efforts.

**Mr. Belle** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Mr. President, for having organized this open debate, which is providing the Security Council with an opportunity to revisit the question of the proliferation of and illicit trade in small arms, a matter of great concern. I thank Ms. Hannelore Hoppe for her

introduction of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/258).

My delegation associates itself with the statement to be made by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the presidency of the European Union, and I shall simply make a few additional comments that I believe to be essential.

In 2006, former Secretary-General Kofi Annan made the alarming observation that "The death toll from small arms dwarfs that of all other weapons systems" (*A/54/2000, para. 238*). Worse still, those victims are primarily civilians: men, women and children who are most often in the most vulnerable sectors of the population. In the report before us today, unfortunately, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon notes no positive developments.

There has been no easing of the gravity of the consequences of proliferation of and illicit trade in small arms, and the need for action is obvious. The international community already has some tools at its disposal. For instance, the embargoes imposed by the Security Council are legally binding and must be strictly applied. The Secretary-General's recommendations regarding cooperation among all actors — the Security Council, peacekeeping missions, Member States and INTERPOL — should also be fully implemented. Belgium welcomes in particular the emphasis placed on the situation of children in armed conflict.

More generally, the illicit trade in small arms can be stemmed only if systematic measures are taken to provide a framework for the legal trade, through mandatory marking and tracing, regulation of the status of brokers and other intermediaries and strengthening export controls. In that spirit, Belgium supports the adoption of an arms trade treaty that would put in place common international norms for the import, export and transfer of conventional weapons.

Belgian law already includes provisions based directly on these concerns. A law adopted on 9 June 2006 imposes strict controls on the possession of weapons by private individuals on Belgian territory. Moreover, the brokerage profession is regulated by a law adopted on 25 March 2003. Belgium's law of 26 March 2003 incorporates the criteria of the European Union Code of Conduct on Arms Exports, thereby making them binding. It is important to note that this law prohibits the exportation of weapons to countries where children are a part of armed forces.

The regional dimension is of equal importance in addressing places of both origin and destination of the illegal trade. Here, Belgium welcomes the follow-up given to the Decision of the Ministerial Council of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe on combating the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons by air, adopted in late 2006.

Belgium is also shouldering its responsibility with respect to cooperation and assistance. Since 2001, we have made more than €7 million in bilateral contributions towards implementing the objectives of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms. That sum is in addition to the contribution of the European Union. In this way, Belgium has supported the formulation of national plans of action in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda and Burundi, with a view to promoting cooperation among those three countries, including in the area of border control.

Belgium considers that the third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, to be held in July 2008, should aim at achieving concrete results and should focus on a limited number of topics, with a view to strengthening the implementation of the Programme of Action.

Belgium thanks the Secretary-General for the recommendations set out in his report. Their implementation could help us to better meet the challenge still posed by the illicit trade in small arms. Beyond that challenge itself, development, peace and security in many regions are at stake.

**Mr. Ripert** (France) (*spoke in French*): France fully supports the statement to be made by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union.

Despite what the term "small arms" might suggest, vast damage is caused by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. The report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/258) describes the long-term destabilization of societies and the plunder of their resources, along with the thousands of victims this trade claims, particularly in Africa. The Secretary-General also stresses something that my Belgian colleague has rightly emphasized and that should be of particular concern to us: among the main

victims of arms trafficking are the most vulnerable members of society: women and children. We must take account of the role and views of women on this issue; the Secretary-General's proposals are particularly welcome in that respect.

The same holds true for children. As members know, France has committed itself unconditionally to working to improve the situation of children in armed conflict and ease their suffering. In that regard combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is of the highest priority.

We are grateful to you, Mr. President, for having organized today's debate on a theme that, in a sense, is at the core of the Council's activities. Beyond the damage already mentioned, the trafficking in small arms and light weapons poses a threat to peace. These weapons threaten the safety and security of United Nations personnel. Their presence is often in direct violation of embargoes imposed by the Security Council, and this justifies the increasing degree to which they are taken into account in the mandates of peacekeeping operations, and in programmes for disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and for security sector reform. In this area, the Secretary-General recommends greater synergy among the activities of the Security Council and of all others involved in combating small arms and light weapons. These recommendations are most welcome.

As a nation, France is deeply committed to combating illicit trafficking, and has been for many years. In 2002 we made an active contribution to the drafting and adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms, and we have continued to take action in multilateral forums, first and foremost within the European Union, which has adopted a Code of Conduct on Arms Exports and a Strategy to combat illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, about which my Slovenian colleague will speak.

Moreover, in the framework of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe, France has launched an international initiative to combat the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons by air. We know that the traffic in small arms and light weapons makes ready use of air transportation. It is well known that traffickers outwit the vigilance of the authorities by falsifying transport documents, flight plans and aircraft registration, and by taking risks in the air to elude air-traffic controllers. Our initiatives are aimed first and foremost at enhancing the exchange of information, focusing on control provisions and facilitating cooperation in that sphere. Our efforts also seek to promote partnership between air transport companies to identify the optimum measures to be adopted, given the economy of that sector. Finally, we are also seeking to establish a guide of best practices. Air transport is an essential part of that traffic and we hope to put an end to it.

Within the United Nations, we place our hopes in and have resolutely committed ourselves to several initiatives to address various key facets of trafficking. Identifying the source of small arms and light weapons and the traceability and marking of weapons are among the critical aspects of the fight against trafficking. France and Switzerland therefore took the initiative of sponsoring an international instrument adopted in 2005. We had hoped that the instrument would be legally binding, but we welcome the first steps that it has allowed us to take and which point the way for the future.

A second vital target is brokers. We are actively involved in drafting an instrument to combat illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons. We know that brokers have become central, inescapable and especially noxious figures in trafficking.

Thirdly, with respect to consumable items, like the Secretary-General we wish to emphasize the importance of keeping munitions and ammunition in mind. We are therefore deeply involved in the group of experts on surplus ammunition.

Finally, with respect to end-users, we welcome the early work of experts on a treaty on the arms trade, a major initiative that will contribute to more responsible management of arms transfers and to improved international cooperation.

None of those efforts should allow us to forget the magnitude of the task ahead. Several essential stages await us, in particular the upcoming Biennial Meeting of the parties. We call on all States to participate and be involved.

In conclusion, I wish to assure the Secretary-General of France's full cooperation in that field. Our cooperation is owed to past and present victims, as is our stability as a guarantor of international peace and security.

**Mr. Churkin** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): We are grateful to the Secretary-General for submitting his report on small arms.

The Russian Federation has consistently supported the strengthening of the United Nations role in coordinating the efforts of the international community to resolve the problem of illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. We believe that preventing the illegal proliferation of such weapons is especially urgent in the context of the struggle against terrorism and mitigating the consequences of armed conflict.

The United Nations Conference to Review the implementation of the Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, which took place in the summer of 2006, demonstrated that the international community has yet to agree on a unified approach to high-priority measures to combat the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. It is important, however, that the Programme of Action should remain the foundation of such efforts. We are convinced that the Programme of Action has by no means been exhausted and still has potential to be tapped. We expect greater clarity to be introduced in that respect at the Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, scheduled for July.

We believe that the lack of progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action can be explained to a great extent by the lack of financial resources hobbling the developing countries, first and foremost, and by a lack of qualified personnel. However, the dearth of the necessary political will also makes it impossible to regulate that sphere appropriately. Donor assistance to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is often not spent in the best possible way. In our opinion, the problem lies in the slow pace of implementation of the International Tracing Instrument.

In our view, the situation with respect to the submission of annual national reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action is also not entirely favourable. The number of submissions continues to decline steadily from year to year. That is an alarming sign of the possible weakening of States' attention to the problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. At the same time, it would seem obvious that, until that problem is resolved, it will be impossible to achieve the comprehensive settlement of existing conflicts, the eradication of poverty, sustainable development, the effective struggle against terrorism, or international security and stability as a whole.

Another thorny aspect are the activities of illegal brokers. Analysis by the Panel of Governmental Experts has shown that only 40 countries have a legislative basis governing brokerage activities. There is a need to impose order in that sphere. The Russian Federation advocates stringent control over brokerage activities and a restricted number of arms brokers. The basis of our approach is our own experience in granting the right to engage in such activities to a single, State-sanctioned intermediary broker.

States still have much to do to implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects at the national level, and above all to enhance control over the production and distribution of small arms and light weapons and to strengthen regional cooperation. Unfortunately, we note that, in several regions throughout the world, the situation with respect to the stockpiling of small arms and light weapons, the security of arsenals, the collection and destruction of surplus weapons, and the establishment and implementation of an appropriate legislative basis is not only not improving, but is in fact deteriorating.

In that respect, we favour intensified national and regional efforts to put an end to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We also attach great importance to the implementation by all countries of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. We believe that waging an effective battle against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons would be assisted by the adoption by the international community of a number of additional measures to prevent weapons from slipping from licit into illicit circulation, in particular measures to end the production of small arms and light weapons using expired licenses or without licences; to ban the transfer of small arms and light weapons to non-State end-users; to promote the verification by exporters of importers' storage and end-use of various types of small arms and light weapons; and to tighten control over re-exports. We intend actively to

promote such measures at the upcoming Biennial Meeting.

A distinct aspect of the problem of small arms and light weapons is strengthening control over man-portable air defence systems in the context of the fight against international terrorism. We believe it advisable to extend the control principles enshrined in a number of international documents, including those adopted in the framework of such regional organizations as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe and the Asia Pacific Economic Cooperation forum, to all regions of the world.

In conclusion, we affirm the Russian Federation's readiness and potential to render expert assistance, in response to appropriate requests, in problems related to monitoring the distribution of small arms and light weapons and the destruction of surplus weapons. We also express our thanks for the organization and convening of today's debate, which provides yet another opportunity to review the approaches adopted by members of the international community to the most important problem of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. We are ready to continue to work constructively to resolve that issue.

**Mr. Natalegawa** (Indonesia): Let me thank the Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for her briefing. I would also like to thank the Secretary-General for his report on small arms. This report provides a clear picture of the multidimensional and multilevel nature of the challenge of small arms today. It clearly underlines the responsibilities accruing to various organs of the United Nations, including this Council, in addressing these challenges.

The International Committee of the Red Cross estimates that some 90 per cent of recent war casualties have been brought about by small arms. The threat posed by these weapons arises from the widely known fact that they tend to be relatively cheap, portable and easy to conceal. These weapons, therefore, are unfortunately in high demand and are easily accessible in civil wars, terrorism, organized crime and gang warfare. Much monumental human misery may be traced to them.

In a wider context, small arms are not only a security issue, they are also a development issue. Developing countries continue to be threatened by the destruction caused by these weapons and the hindrance such destruction has been to productive economic activities.

In our view, our strategies for dealing with small arms should include not only curbing illicit trade and brokering, but also dealing with existing stockpiles and surpluses of arms and controlling their spread. Such efforts have begun in some places, such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and have met with considerable success. Greater effort is needed, with cooperation among Governments and regional actors, to ensure that surplus or excessive small arms are destroyed. Furthermore, global advocacy can contribute in raising public awareness of the importance of addressing those issues and in galvanizing support within countries and regions.

As a subscriber to the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, Indonesia finds it both necessary and beneficial to start to develop innovative and robust methods for systematically measuring the scope, scale and distribution of armed violence, as well as its impact, and to develop measurable reductions in armed violence. Indeed, concerted efforts should be pursued to develop economies, eliminate poverty and create sustainable development, particularly in the poor countries that are still fragile and susceptible to the emergence of or relapse into internal conflict.

My delegation is pleased to note the Council's renewed focus on the issue of small arms. The consideration of this issue in the Council, while extremely important on its own, should always be in synergy with that in the General Assembly, which has been seized of this issue. We believe that the Assembly has provided important norm-setting initiatives, including the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects, as well as the development of instruments on international tracing and illicit brokering.

Pursuant to the Security Council request contained in its presidential statement of 29 June 2007 (*S/PRST/2007/24*), the Secretary-General has submitted some far-reaching recommendations, particularly with regard to data collection and development issues, that could be of benefit to this process. In this regard, the Security Council could, for its part, contribute in the ongoing international effort by closely considering those recommendations.

Indonesia believes that one of the most important elements in achieving success in our effort to address this highly complex problem is coherence and cooperation among all relevant bodies, such as Governments, international organizations, the World Bank, the donor community, United Nations agencies, non-governmental organizations and civil society. Such a comprehensive approach will strengthen the full implementation of the Programme of Action.

With regard to the Programme of Action, we support the creation of a common framework for connecting needs with resources in order to enhance the capacity of States to implement the Programme. We find particularly useful the electronic database that the Secretariat is working on for coordinating small arms programming.

With a view to better addressing the challenges brought by small arms, Indonesia is in favour of an early multilateral negotiation to establish a legally binding instrument to curb the illicit transfer of small arms, including ammunition.

While supporting those practical measures, my delegation is also of the view that the legitimate defence and security needs of States should always be taken into account. The inherent right of individual or collective self-defence in accordance with Article 51 of the Charter, including the right of States to maintain their territorial integrity, should not fall victim to our effort to prevent small arms from falling into the wrong hands. The legitimate rights of sovereign States in acquiring and possessing small arms and Government-to-Government trade relations regarding these weapons should also be guaranteed.

Finally, Indonesia emphasizes that only by concerted action can we reach the goal of reducing the flow of these weapons for use by non-State actors in war, crime and violence throughout the world. Only by persistence, as well as through the visibility that this Council has, can we ensure a brighter future for societies on which small arms have inflicted destruction, or might yet invite damage.

**Mr. DeLaurentis** (United States of America): We thank Ms. Hoppe for her introduction of the Secretary-General's report. The United States believes that the report effectively outlines steps that States need to take and the tools at their disposal to reduce the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons and to enforce United Nations arms embargoes. We particularly note those recommendations in the report that call for concrete actions by States and increased coordination among donors.

The United States has been a key player in the international effort to reduce the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We apply strict controls on weapons transfers, both import and export, including a robust end-user monitoring system, strong controls over brokers and effective stockpile management practices. The United States also continues to render assistance to other States in their efforts to implement the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons, as well as the International Tracing Instrument, through our assistance in small arms and light weapons destruction, stockpile security and management, end-user controls and the establishment or strengthening of brokering controls.

In its presidential statements of June 2007, the Security Council laid out concrete steps for States to implement the Programme of Action. In particular, the Council encouraged all States to strengthen physical security and stockpile management, destroy surplus and obsolete small arms and light weapons, ensure that all small arms are marked at the time of manufacture and import, strengthen export and border controls, and control brokering activities. The United States has played an active role in encouraging States to mark all its weapons and trace illicit small arms. We trace nearly 50,000 weapons for foreign law enforcement agencies per year. We have also been active in the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument.

I have a few comments on the Secretary-General's recommendations.

The report stresses the importance of end-user certificates. We are supportive of that approach but would urge States to go one step further and establish a more comprehensive end-user monitoring system. Illicit brokers have proved that a certificate can easily be forged. A robust end-user monitoring system, however, would allow States to conduct physical pre- and post-shipment inspections, as well as random inspections following a weapons shipment to verify that the small arms have not been transferred without prior approval and are being used as intended. The recipient State would be responsible for establishing

sound customs and import procedures in order to verify the accuracy of the shipment.

Illicit brokering was also highlighted in the report. The United States participated actively in the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts on brokering. We would urge States to take a close look at the recommendations put forward by the Group. If implemented, those recommended provisions could go a long way in reducing arms embargo violations and other illicit transfers.

The report also makes frequent reference to possible areas for Security Council action with respect to arms embargoes. Almost all examples and recommendations in the report are drawn from the most difficult and complex cases which have involved both embargoes and peacekeeping missions in countries or areas where there has been a complete or near-complete breakdown in civil order. There is a legal maxim that says "hard cases do not make good law". We should not look to those most difficult and complex cases as a source of rules for general application in future arms embargoes and/or peacekeeping operations.

Moreover, the report implies that it is the principal duty of the Security Council or its components or of peacekeeping missions set up under its authority to enforce arms embargoes. It is not. Enforcement of arms embargoes is primarily a duty of States Members of the United Nations. It is our view that the establishment of comprehensive national laws and regulations is key to the enforcement of arms embargoes and sanctions and is the cornerstone for the reduction of illicit small arms and light weapons proliferation. However, we would caution against actions that increase the burden on States through additional studies and mandates, since more assistance, not more reports and meetings, is required for the international community to reach our common goal.

We would also caution against efforts at standardizing practices without some indication that such standardization will be effective at combating the illicit trade or do not duplicate already existing and effective regional best practices.

Finally, the United States welcomes the inclusion of the United Nations Peacebuilding Commission in the report's consideration of ways to address small arms issues in peacebuilding efforts. We want to see the Peacebuilding Commission succeed in its role of marshalling support for sustainable peacekeeping. We welcome greater coordination that helps reduce the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

**Ms. Pierce** (United Kingdom): I join colleagues in welcoming this debate and in thanking the Secretary-General for preparing a thought-provoking and challenging report. I would also like to thank the Deputy to the High Representative for her intervention. I would like to associate my delegation with the statement to be delivered by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union later in this debate.

As we approach the Third Biennial Meeting of States, this debate is an important opportunity to highlight small arms issues. The United Kingdom is committed to taking an active role in this process. We have submitted comprehensive implementation reports for both the United Nations Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. Through you, Mr. President, I would encourage all Member States to do the same as soon as possible.

We regret the lack of consensus at the 2006 Biennial Meeting of States. This year's event is an important opportunity for the United Nations to revitalize its leadership in tackling the global problem of illicit small arms and light weapons. The United Kingdom hopes that all Member States can agree that we should restore the reputation of the United Nations as the pre-eminent forum for controlling and curbing the illicit spread of small arms and light weapons.

For this reason, we should all aim to conclude the Biennial Meeting of States with agreement on a practical outcome document. This document should set the framework for work over subsequent years, highlight best practices in implementing the United Nations Programme of Action and identify areas where greater attention is needed.

The irresponsible trade in arms holds back development and perpetuates inequality, fuels conflict and results in many people around the world being injured, killed or subjected to human rights abuses. The United Kingdom is committed to action to stop this trade. My Government has provided around $60 million since 2001 to support conflict prevention by addressing long-term structural causes of conflict and supporting post-conflict reconstruction.

In 2007 and 2008, the United Kingdom assisted non-governmental organizations and United Nations partners to collect and destroy weapons, develop and implement national and regional control agreements and undertake public awareness campaigns. My Government continues to take a leading role in the development of globally agreed high standards of international regulation of the trade in all conventional arms. We are committed to working with partners at home and abroad to bring a halt to irresponsible trading in conventional weapons.

The key priority for the United Kingdom is the creation of an effective arms trade treaty to help prevent the irresponsible international sale and transfer of conventional weapons. We welcome the useful discussions at the first session of the Group of Government Experts on an Arms Trade Treaty in February of this year and we look forward to continuing that work at the second session later next month.

The United Kingdom is also fully committed to the other areas of United Nations work relating to small arms and light weapons. We welcome the recommendations contained in the report by the Group of Government Experts and have considered further steps to enhance international cooperation to combat illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons. We are active members of the ongoing Group of Government Experts on ammunitions issues. We are assisting efforts to improve stockpile management and security. We strongly support the development of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms.

We must not close our eyes to the negative impact of illicit small arms and light weapons. I agree very much with what the representative of Indonesia said on this subject. As the Secretary-General's report sets out in its opening pages, illicit small arms adversely affect security, human rights and social and economic development. These are issues at the very core of the Charter of the United Nations. That is why we believe that continued work on these issues by the members of this Council and by the wider membership of the United Nations is imperative.

**Mr. Mantovani** (Italy): I thank Ms. Hoppe for her briefing. While aligning ourselves with the statement that Slovenia is going to make on behalf of the European Union, we welcome the initiative by South Africa to hold this debate on small arms and light weapons. The report of the Secretary-General — for which we are grateful — is proof that the decision of the Security Council to put this issue back on its agenda has been timely and appropriate.

The Secretary-General's report confirms that the uncontrolled dissemination of small arms and light weapons fuels armed conflicts and criminal violence, claims a very heavy toll in human lives, contributes to human rights violations and seriously hinders global and regional stability as well as economic recovery in post-conflict areas.

For this reason, Italy attaches traditional priority to the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects, consistent with the related 2005 European Union Strategy and the 2003 European Union Common Position on the control of arms brokering.

The multifaceted nature of this threat requires a holistic response aimed at enhancing synergies among all relevant forums and initiatives. Italy welcomes the direct involvement of the Security Council through its arms embargoes and the related monitoring tasks assigned to some peacekeeping missions.

We also support the implementation of the United Nations Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and the Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. In that respect, I wish to recall that in February 2008 the European Union adopted a joint action that allocated €300,000 to promote compliance with the latter.

Thus, Italy looks forward to a successful outcome of the Third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action and stands by the efforts of the President-designate, Ambassador Čekuolis, to focus deliberations on a few crucial areas such as international cooperation, brokering, tracing and stockpile management, with a view to identifying outstanding implementation challenges.

Italy is convinced that further work should be done to strengthen national, regional and global regulations on small arms and light weapons brokering,

transfers controls and end-user certifications. Italy also favours making the political commitments of the Programme of Action and of the tracing instrument legally binding.

We deem it important to increase cooperation with international organizations that have developed practices of interest relevant to the common goal of eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Noteworthy initiatives also take place at the regional level. For instance, the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe's handbook of best practices on small arms and light weapons offers comprehensive terms of reference for national legislation.

No solution to the destabilizing accumulation of small arms and light weapons can be effective if it is limited to the political and security aspects only. It is imperative to consider the issue also from the perspective of economic and social development. Projects concerning small arms and light weapons must be fully integrated in national development strategies in post-conflict countries.

The Peacebuilding Commission can play a decisive role in addressing this problem through the integrated strategic frameworks for peacebuilding elaborated with local authorities, which should include — whenever appropriate — programmes concerning the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants, as well as youth unemployment.

In a broader perspective, it is necessary to foster international cooperation to that end, bearing in mind the need to devote attention to gender approaches, women and children often being the actual victims of small arms and light weapons. Finally, we took note with interest of the initiative undertaken by the United Nations Coordinating Action on Small Arms to draft common standards applicable to multilateral and national projects in the field of small arms and light weapons.

Facing one of the main threats to global and regional security, we all need to show our common purpose and steadfast resolve. The Security Council and the international community can rely on Italy's active support and contribution.

**Mr. Liu Zhenmin** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation would like to thank you, Sir, for convening this open debate. We would like to thank Ms. Hannelore Hoppe of the Office for Disarmament Affairs for her introduction of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/258).

We are glad to note that the issue of small arms has received full attention from the Security Council. Several open debates have been held and a number of presidential statements adopted. The Security Council has always stressed the importance of addressing this problem as it reviews such issues as the protection of civilians, women and children in armed conflict. This emphasis has played an important role in effectively reducing illicit trafficking of small arms and enhancing regional peace and stability.

China supports the Security Council's continued important role on the small arms issue, in accordance with its mandate. In addressing this issue, the Security Council should coordinate with other United Nations bodies so as to complement and promote the work of all actors.

The excessive accumulation and illicit trafficking of small arms have exacerbated conflicts in many countries and regions, disrupted peace processes and post-conflict reconstruction and abetted terrorism, drug trafficking and other criminal activities, thus causing negative political, economic and social impact.

The issue of small arms has drawn increasing attention from the international community. In recent years, the international community has made many efforts and achieved some progress in seeking solutions. The Firearms Protocol, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects were both concluded in 2001. They have provided a legal and policy basis for addressing this problem. Since then, international efforts to combat the illicit trade in small arms have intensified, as evidenced by the successful Biennial Meetings, the timely conclusion of the International Instrument on marking and tracing small arms and light weapons and the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons (see A/62/163).

Although no final document was adopted at the 2006 United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the Programme of Action, the Programme of Action still provides

important guidance for international endeavour to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Parties concerned have also made continued efforts to promote comprehensive implementation of the Programme of Action.

The third Biennial Meeting on small arms and light weapons will be held in July this year in New York. The meeting will review the implementation of the Programme of Action at the international, regional and national levels and that of the International Instrument on marking and tracing illicit small arms and light weapons. This represents an important opportunity for the parties concerned to share experiences and promote comprehensive implementation of the Programme of Action. We look forward to a successful outcome of the meeting.

The Chinese Government has all along attached great importance to combating illicit trafficking of small arms. We have taken an active part in international endeavours in this field. In recent years, China has adopted a series of specific measures in the areas of domestic legislation, law enforcement and capacity- and institution-building. We have earnestly implemented the Programme of Action.

At the same time, we have actively participated in international exchanges and cooperation by holding international seminars, providing assistance, within our capabilities, to countries and regions concerned and maintaining regular operational contacts with the relevant departments of other countries and international organizations.

China is of the view that comprehensive and effective implementation of the Programme of Action and other relevant international instruments, strengthened capacity-building of countries in the areas in question and continued promotion of multilateral processes for combating the illicit trade in small arms are of great significance in maintaining regional stability, promoting economic development and building a harmonious world of lasting peace.

China will continue to increase dialogue and cooperation with parties concerned and will work for the early eradication of the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms.

**The President**: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of South Africa.

We too would like to thank the Secretary-General for his report (S/2008/258) and Ms. Hoppe, Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, for presenting the report.

The Secretary-General characterizes the issue of small arms and light weapons as complex, because it has a direct bearing on a number of other important policy areas such as sustainable development, human rights, poverty and underdevelopment. It is clear that this scourge has an impact on mandates within the United Nations system and requires attention at the national, subregional, regional and international levels if it is to be effectively addressed.

In other words, small arms and light weapons have become the weapons of choice for the warlords, who have been able to recruit children as their preferred soldiers in some intractable conflicts, particularly in Africa. That is one of the fundamental reasons that we asked the Security Council to hold this debate. In Africa, our people die more from small arms than from any other weapon.

United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted by the General Assembly in 2001, remains the central global instrument to prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. The Programme of Action represented a hard-won compromise among some very divergent views on the issue of the undertakings to be included. A number of States, including South Africa, would have preferred the Programme of Action to be far more encompassing, but other Member States accepted what was attainable during the first universal consideration of this important issue, in 2001. We hope we can attain more concrete results in the upcoming Biennial Meeting to be held in July.

The full implementation of the Programme of Action in all its aspects should remain central to our national, subregional, regional and international efforts to address this scourge. The Programme of Action provides for international assistance and cooperation, as well as for the coordination of efforts which, along with the issue of stockpile management, brokering and the international tracing instrument, will be key focus areas of the upcoming third Biennial Meeting of States on the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. We believe it is important for

the General Assembly, which holds the primary responsibility to oversee and monitor the implementation of the Programme of Action, to also consider these recommendations.

Nonetheless, South Africa believes that the issue of small arms and light weapons has a direct bearing on two aspects of the Security Council's mandate: arms embargoes and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) efforts. Guided by our commitment to the peaceful resolution of conflicts, we support arms embargoes that contribute to lasting peace and stability. The mandates of peacekeeping operations handed down through Security Council resolutions, therefore, need to be backed up with the system-wide resources of the United Nations to ensure that the DDR components of these mandates are sufficiently sustainable and are carried out effectively.

In this regard, we welcome the Secretary-General's recommendations to the Security Council on the need for increased practical cooperation between all the relevant international and regional components involved in peacekeeping missions. The Security Council will need to consider ways to strengthen the synergies between arms embargoes and DDR efforts, as well as the creation of dedicated units within peacekeeping missions, not only to monitor arms embargoes, but also to address DDR issues.

While we are pleased that this debate has provided an opportunity for members of the General Assembly and the Security Council to debate and refine our common understanding of these issues, we still believe that the Security Council also has a responsibility to review how small arms and light weapons can contribute negatively to the maintenance of international peace and security.

I now resume my functions as President of the Security Council.

Before I give the floor to the next speaker, I would kindly remind all speakers of the five-minute rule, to which we have tried very hard to adhere.

I now give the floor to the representative of Argentina.

**Mr. Argüello** (Argentina) (*spoke in Spanish*): As we have been asked to be brief, I will start by merely thanking the Security Council for the opportunity to take part in this open debate. I wish also to say how much we appreciated Ms. Hannelore Hoppe's introduction of the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/258). Delegations know how sensitive this question is and how much importance my delegation attaches to it, as demonstrated during our most recent membership of the Council. Thus, after quite some time, it is good to see that this organ has renewed its interest in this question and has convened this meeting.

Previous speakers have been eloquent in their reflections on this problem, which is becoming increasingly urgent. The threat posed by the illicit trade in small arms is a matter of concern to the entire international community. At the same time, small arms seem to be the weapons of choice in most of the conflicts addressed by the Security Council. The wide availability of such arms and their ammunition in many regions is one of the main causes of insecurity and poverty, as well as a factor that fuels many conflicts. For that reason, we believe that synergies between United Nations arms embargoes and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration activities should be strengthened.

It is almost nine years since the Security Council first addressed the question of small arms; yet we still have a great deal to do in our efforts in prevent, combat and eradicate the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. However, this is a complex and multidimensional problem involving security, conflict prevention and resolution, crime prevention and humanitarian and development issues, among other dimensions. It also calls for joint action by the States, intergovernmental organizations and civil society, at all levels.

The report of the Secretary-General stresses the need for the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission consider ways to increase and improve their interaction on questions linked to this matter, with a view to promoting the formulation of long-term conflict prevention and peacebuilding strategies, and in order to identify existing links among the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, the illicit exploitation of natural and other resources and armed conflict.

I would like to reiterate my country's position on what we believe are priority elements for an integrated and comprehensive strategy to respond to the challenge posed by this problem. First, there is a need to strengthen international cooperation and assistance, and to build capacities, including through technical and

financial assistance, to support and facilitate local, national, regional and global efforts to combat this scourge. It is necessary also to address questions related to marking and tracing, control of arms transfers, illicit brokering and ammunition, just to mention a few. To that end, the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms has become a basic instrument to prevent conflicts, to attain peace and stability and to encourage predictable and transparent conduct by States.

Finally, I would like to reaffirm the support of my delegation for the initiatives enabling us to address the various dimensions of this problem, such as the convening of this open debate. Argentina will continue to work with resolve to contribute to this endeavour.

**The President**: Let me indicate that we are honoured to have followed up on the Argentine delegation's work on this issue in the Council. I promised the predecessor of the representative of Argentina that when we became a member of the Council, we would follow-up on this issue.

I now give the floor to the representative of Mexico.

**Mr. Heller** (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): My delegation congratulates South Africa on its assumption of the Presidency of the Security Council for the month of April and on having convened this meeting.

Mexico attaches particular importance to this open debate on the question of small arms because of the serious impact that the illicit trade and use of these weapons by organized crime has on our national security and on stability in the region.

The report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/258) — and we would like to thank Ms. Hoppe for her introduction — clearly illustrates the evil cycle of the use of these arms. Its quotation, in paragraph 8, from the *Small Arms Survey* is revealing: "more is known about the number of nuclear warheads, stocks of chemical weapons and transfers of major conventional weapons than about small arms." As a consequence, we do not have accurate data on the number of these weapons circulating around the world. According to one estimate, there could be at least 875 million. This lack of precision is serious enough on its own, but we must add the fact that this is the only category of arms not under State monopoly but that is in the hands of private individuals. Moreover, to the licensed production, estimated at 7.5 million to 8 million arms per year, we must add the illicit production, which encompasses countries in conflict or with scarce resources. The circle of the lack of control is completed by illicit trade and brokering and by the tremendous disparities in national legislation for regulation of civilian possession.

As affirmed by the Secretary-General, small arms are the weapons of choice in civil conflicts, as well as in terrorism, organized crime and common crime. Latin America is one of the regions of the world that have been most affected by the illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons to common criminals and members of transnational organized crime; unfortunately, it is the region where the highest number of firearm-related deaths are concentrated.

The illegal flow of weapons in this category is a decisive factor in the crises that the Council regularly addresses, since it contributes to instability not only within States, but also at the subregional and regional levels. In Latin America, and certainly in Mexico, we see in particular the damage caused by organized crime linked to drug trafficking, which uses these weapons in its daily operations.

Combating the illegal flow of small arms requires a comprehensive approach, which must include various levels, from joint action at the multilateral level to subregional, national and social action. One ongoing issue that we must resolve is, without a doubt, the disparity in national legislation regulating civilian possession. It is an obvious fact that what cannot be acquired in one country can be acquired with relative ease in a neighbouring country, just by crossing the border.

The root of the problem is that weapons acquired as a result of laws that prevent the State from exercising control over them are able to cross borders, giving rise to security problems that affect not only the recipient countries, but also the country of origin itself. The situation becomes even more complicated when organized crime intervenes and establishes the link between drugs and weapons. Hence, the importance of bilateral and regional cooperation and coordination mechanisms, which are gradually being improved and which have produced encouraging results.

Under these circumstances, the fight against the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons must be a

priority for the international community, as it is for the Government of Mexico.

Mexico considers as highly useful the biennial presentation of the Secretary-General's report on small arms, which virtually coincides with the Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

We have supported full implementation of the Programme of Action and have maintained our firm support for the follow-up mechanisms and resolutions adopted in the General Assembly on this issue. In our most recent national report, we presented data reflecting the securing and destruction of weapons as well as exchange programmes for collection from the civilian population. All of this is accompanied by large-scale operations against organized crime and by awareness-raising campaigns to prevent the illicit possession, transfer or use of firearms. That is why we support recommendation 11 in the Secretary-General's report that the Security Council should encourage States to adopt measures to cooperate in verifying end-user certificates, which prevent the diversion of weapons.

Mexico, together with many other countries in the region, has emphasized that it is vitally important that the marking and tracing instrument become legally binding. We also urge that it include norms relating to ammunition control. However, there has been no consensus, despite the inherent link to the problem of small arms and light weapons.

Mexico believes that there are still many aspects on which States can continue to work, thereby strengthening the Programme of Action. These include international cooperation on marking and tracing, the adoption of measures to regulate brokering and the use of end-user certificates, and proper management and control of stockpiles.

Furthermore, we recognize, as indicated in the report of the Secretary-General, that the Programme of Action, despite its undeniable importance, suffers from significant weaknesses, beginning with the fact that it is not legally binding and does not address the issue of the illicit ammunition trade. Mexico regrets that it hardly refers to the issue of irresponsible civilian weapons possession or to the effects of these weapons in humanitarian terms.

Finally, my delegation cannot fail to agree with the Secretary-General as to the economic and social impact that conflicts, or just the situation of insecurity and instability, can have on the development and prosperity of any nation. The amount of resources that must be diverted by States to combat the illicit small arms trade and its consequences represents enormous and unfair costs to society. The major producers of these weapons must shoulder their responsibility and increase the number of measures to control their production and, above all, their export. The idea of an international arms trade treaty is a good initiative that Mexico has supported enthusiastically, but that is still far from being implemented. Therefore, we shall continue to stress the importance of the issue that we are considering today.

**The President**: I now call on the representative of Israel.

**Mr. Gillerman** (Israel): At the outset, allow me, Sir, on this, your last day — for the moment — as President of the Security Council, to congratulate you and to thank you for your able stewardship of the Council during this month and for convening this important debate. I also wish to thank Ms. Hoppe for her informative briefing.

More than 640 million small arms and light weapons — whenever we talk about "SALW", I think that the "L" could also stand for "lethal", and not just "light", weapons — and 16 billion rounds of ammunition are in circulation today across the globe, with an additional 8 million new weapons entering the market each year. Most present-day conflicts are fought primarily with these weapons, and they are used in civil wars, terrorism, organized crime and gang warfare. Moreover, civilians are often those most affected and endangered by them.

Israel views the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, and in particular the transfer of those weapons to terrorists, as an imminent threat to international peace and security. Therefore, my delegation welcomes the report submitted by the Secretary-General on small arms (S/2008/258) and wishes to express its support in particular for the Secretary-General's proposal that the Coordinating Action on Small Arms be revived as one of the priorities in the field of disarmament for this year.

Israel has consistently placed high on its agenda the issue of preventing the illicit proliferation of small

arms and light weapons. We strongly believe that harmonized cooperation and coordination at the global, regional, subregional and bilateral levels would enhance the ongoing international efforts to prevent proliferation and combat terrorism. In our opinion, the best way to curb illicit arms proliferation is through strong national commitment and determination. In that regard, Israel's small arms and light weapons export control policy includes tight controls aimed at, inter alia, the prohibition of exports to regions or States under Security Council arms sales embargoes, non-State entities, subversive and underground movements, terrorist or guerrilla groups, criminal organizations and areas of ongoing internal armed conflict.

In our region, the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons presents a growing danger, owing to the role of terrorist organizations. The terrorism and violence carried out by extremists against Israel, and against Israeli civilians in particular, is enabled by the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons to terrorist organizations such as Hamas and Islamic Jihad in the Palestinian areas and Hizbullah in Lebanon. While State sponsorship of terrorism is not a new challenge for the international community per se, the increase in size, operational capacity and military technology of non-State actors reminds us time and time again that terrorist organizations cannot exist without the support of States.

Two extremist States in our region, Syria and Iran, are heavily invested in transferring a variety of weapons to Hizbullah in Lebanon, among them small arms and light weapons. In addition to providing weapons, Iran also trains terrorists in operational methods. Scores of Hizbullah and Hamas terrorists have been sent for training in Iran in recent months alone. The international community must press for an end to State sponsorship of terrorism.

The security situation has therefore required my Government to spare no effort in combating and preventing terrorist organizations from acquiring small arms and light weapons, especially man-portable air defence systems, mines and improvised explosive devices, ammunition and explosives. Those arms are used by all terrorist organizations in our region to launch attacks targeting, both indiscriminately and intentionally, innocent civilians. The daily attempts to smuggle small arms and light weapons by land via underground tunnels and through abusing humanitarian convoys underscores the significance of the threat.

Let us not forget that small arms and light weapons pose a threat not only to States and their civilians, but also to the peacekeepers who are often deployed to areas where the illicit transfer of weapons takes place. The Council is aware of numerous incidents over the past few years. I wish to point to one in particular, which occurred in southern Lebanon just last month — as detailed in paragraph 24 of the most recent report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of resolution 1559 (2004), contained in document S/2008/264 — in which a patrol of the United Nations Interim Force in Lebanon encountered unidentified armed elements in its area of operation. In that case, Hizbullah and its supporters who enable the small arms and light weapons to reach the terrorists both posed a grave danger to peacekeepers and the fulfilment of their mandate, as indicated by this very Council.

Israel welcomed the adoption of the Programme of Action at the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in 2001. The Programme of Action has contributed significantly to international arms control efforts in the past few years by raising the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons to a higher priority. The 2006 Review Conference reiterated the key role of the Programme of Action. However, Israel, like other delegations, regrets that the Conference was not able to achieve a consensus document.

Israel actively participated in the negotiations leading to the successful conclusion of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons. The implementation of the Instrument, as well as the Programme of Action, would contribute to reducing human suffering if carried out by all States. For Israel, as well as for other States in our region and around the world, the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action has become more relevant than ever. As such, we look forward to the coming Biennial Meeting on the Programme of Action in New York in July, and we support the Secretary-General's call for an operational and action-oriented meeting. We hope that the Security Council will be very vigilant in not allowing that vital issue to be politicized, as seems to be the aim of at least one member of the Council. We consider it to be a

fundamental and crucial step towards progress in the peace process.

Due to that commitment, Israel is ready to continue the efforts to identify standards for transfer control to reduce the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Such standards could include the implementation of the marking and tracing instrument, full compliance with the Security Council's arms embargos, the assessment of the risk of diversion to illicit end users, a ban on the transfer of man-portable air defence systems to non-State actors, satisfactory management and control of stockpiles, as well as other similar measures.

When addressing the relationship between illicit arms and maintaining international peace and security, we tend to focus on statistics and figures to bolster our call for action, but we must remember that behind each victim affected by the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons — be it in armed conflict, civil strife or terrorism — is the face and name of a loved one, now lost to his or her dear family and friends forever. While the discussions on small arms and light weapons are largely technical, their consequences are overwhelmingly humanitarian. Hence, the lesson for the international community is clear. Whatever disagreements exist on technical matters, dragging our feet on regulation — and worse, continuing to allow the illicit trade of small arms and lethal light weapons and State sponsorship of terrorism — will only exacerbate the threats posed to civilians.

For States to fulfil their obligations to their citizens and ensure their safety and security, there must be a collective resolve to prevent the emergence of situations in which small arms and light weapons and other weapons aggressively threaten civilian populations. Israel, for its part, is prepared to engage with the international community in promoting appropriately robust arms regimes and in ensuring the safety and security of all citizens of the world.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Slovenia.

**Ms. Štiglic** (Slovenia): I have the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union (EU). The candidate countries Turkey, Croatia and the former Yugoslav Republic of Macedonia; the countries of the Stabilisation and Association Process and potential candidates Albania, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Montenegro and Serbia; as well as Ukraine, the Republic of Moldova, Armenia and Georgia align themselves with this declaration.

First of all, let me thank you, Sir, for convening this debate. I would also like to thank the Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for her presentation of the report of the Secretary-General.

In the interests of time, the European Union will shorten its statement. The full version is being distributed and constitutes our official statement.

The European Union sees the proliferation, widespread availability and illicit trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition as among the most dangerous challenges and threats to global stability and security, as well as to economic and social development and prosperity. The easy availability of small arms and light weapons, their associated ammunition and explosives is a fuelling factor for the vast majority of conflicts.

In December 2005, the European Union developed its fully-fledged strategy to combat the illicit accumulation and trafficking of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. The EU small arms and light weapons strategy places under a single heading all the instruments, political and financial, at the disposal of the Union to fight the scourge that the illicit traffic of those weapons represents. The EU remains a major contributor to the fight against the dissemination of illicit small arms and light weapons and ammunition. In Africa, for example, the EU is financially supporting many actions in the field of small arms and light weapons, including stockpile destruction.

The EU will continue to provide support, financial and technical, to Governments, non-governmental organizations and regional organizations and arrangements engaged in the fight against small arms and light weapons trafficking and misuse, and the elimination of dangerous small arms and ammunition stockpiles.

We are committed to curbing the uncontrolled spread and misuse of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition, which cause hundreds of thousands of human deaths every year. We have committed ourselves to addressing that problem through the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms

and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We will need to assess together our achievements and shortcomings in implementing the Programme of Action, which plays a vital role in stemming small arms and light weapons proliferation.

In July this year, States will convene for the third Biennial Meeting to consider the national, regional and global implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. We strongly support the approach of focused and results-oriented consideration of a few issues with a view to enhancing the implementation of the Programme of Action. We call upon all Member States to participate in this important event and stress the need for a continued process at the global level on small arms and light weapons.

In this regard, the EU also welcomes the latest report of the Secretary-General on small arms (S/2008/258). We strongly believe that the General Assembly's mandate to the Secretary-General to submit a report on implementation of the Programme of Action will greatly facilitate further consideration of implementation by all Member States as well as preparations for Biennial Meetings of States.

The EU welcomes the Security Council's continuing engagement on the issue of small arms. We share the view that, in order to make real progress in preventing, combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, States should focus on the strengthening, in particular, of physical security and stockpile management; destruction of surpluses; marking and tracing; strengthening export and border controls; and controlling brokering activities. States need to curb opportunities for the diversion of licit weapons and ammunition to illicit markets.

We are confident that the Security Council will continue to pay particular attention to small arms and light weapons, and we call on all States to do their utmost to contribute to the fight against this scourge, which kills thousands of people every day. The EU will continue to play its part in this common endeavour.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Honduras.

**Mr. Reina Idiaquez** (Honduras) (*spoke in Spanish*): It is an honour for me to take part, for the first time, in a Security Council meeting, one focusing on small arms and light weapons and their negative impact on economic and social development in many developing countries, on a consideration of this complex problem and on a review of our action to make it possible to decide how to avert the destructive, inhumane effects of these weapons and reduce the violence to which they give rise in economically disadvantaged countries and societies.

I congratulate you, Sir, on this important initiative during your presidency of the Council during the month of April.

It is a fact that small arms and light weapons have the most devastating impact in the poorest and economically most disadvantaged countries. Past conflict in the Central American region has led to the presence of incalculable quantities of weapons, both commercial and military, that are neither controlled nor registered. Their price is low, they are easy to transport, store and trade illegally. Most such weapons are disseminated through clandestine distribution nodes, and they are used by criminal groups and organizations seeking to undermine social order, which use them, indiscriminately, against civilians.

Honduras has not been spared the negative effects of such weapons, and our Government has had to adopt national, regional and international measures to address a long-standing problem that has compromised national security in many countries. At the national level, over the past approximately five years, our authorities have focused on ensuring strict compliance with national legislation to regulate the civilian possession of weapons and to set up a reliable database on the quantity of such weaponry in our country. At present, more than 151,000 small arms and light weapons have been registered at the national level. But, despite Government commitment and joint efforts with civil society, it has been impossible to exercise total control of these weapons.

The question of arms trafficking is a complex one to begin with, and it is made more so by regional organized crime in Central America, which takes advantage of the free movement of persons, goods and capital to transport arms of various sizes, with criminal intent. This clearly indicates that the problem goes beyond the national framework and must therefore be addressed at the regional and subregional levels. Additionally, a matter of key importance from the strategic point of view is that the strengthening of democracy in Central America saw the demobilization of portions of the regular armies. This demobilization

process was not carried out properly; it left thousands of officers and tens of thousands of soldiers unemployed and without resources. This had the negative effect of abandoning what we might call qualified labour; some such people ended up being recruited into organized crime.

From this, we learn that, if not carried out properly, the praiseworthy process of democratization and army demobilization in Central America can have negative impacts. Central America's experience shows what should not be done.

At the regional level, in the framework of the Organization of American States, Honduras has signed the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, which entered into force in 1998 in the Latin American region. Thus, in a regional context, we are seeking to put in place substantive measures to facilitate cooperation among States, including through, inter alia, better exchanges of information and experience in the areas of categorization of crimes; marking of weapons; verification of licenses for arms imports; and technical cooperation and assistance. My country, Honduras, endorsed the Antigua Guatemala Declaration of the Regional Preparatory Meeting of the Latin American and Caribbean States for the United Nations Conference to Review Progress Made in the Implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects.

Within the United Nations system, we are party to the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime. We understand the scope of the Protocol and the Convention and the commitments we have undertaken.

I wish in conclusion to emphasize that we are taking part in this debate in a constructive spirit; through the Council, we reaffirm our commitment to and support for the Office for Disarmament Affairs and its activities in this sphere. We also hail Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his spirit of renewal and his vigorous action to promote the fulfilment of international commitments on small arms and light weapons.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Japan.

**Mr. Takasu** (Japan): At the outset, Mr. President, I would like to express my appreciation to you for having convened today's debate on small arms. We are grateful also to Ms. Hannelore Hoppe for her introduction of the Secretary-General's report on small arms (S/2008/258). The report serves as a valuable guidepost for our discussion.

Conflicts are now fought primarily with small arms and light weapons. The international community must make every effort to end the illicit trade in small arms in order to bring about peace and development in post-conflict countries.

The question of small arms and light weapons requires a multidisciplinary approach, as they threaten human security at the nexus of peace and development. The widespread use of small arms results in a large number of casualties and prolongation of armed conflicts. It also gives rise to socio-economic problems such as child soldiers and disruption of post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery efforts.

Japan has already participated actively in United Nations efforts to tackle the issue of small arms and light weapons and has taken the initiative to promote a General Assembly resolution on this issue almost every year since 1995. Since 2001 we have worked together with Colombia and South Africa for the same cause.

We are convinced that it is essential to implement effectively the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade of Small Arms and Light Weapons. Within this framework, Japan welcomes in particular the adoption of the International Tracing Instrument in 2005 and the submission of the report on illicit brokering by the Group of Governmental Experts in 2007 (*A/62/163* and *Corr.1*).

The most important task before us in this context is to make real progress in implementing the Programme of Action and the International Tracing Instrument. For that purpose I suggest two things. First, we should make full use of the biennial review of the implementation of the Programme of Action at the meeting of States. We hope that the third biennial meeting of States, in July, will be successful, because it would provide an opportunity for substantive and action-oriented discussion on priority issues such as international cooperation and assistance, illicit

brokering, stockpile management and disposal of surplus. Secondly, international cooperation and assistance should be strengthened to support the needs of countries and regional organizations in building their capacity.

For our part, Japan has been active in supporting promotion of the International Tracing Instrument, including supporting the recent subregional workshop for Central and West Africa. Japan has also assisted projects in many countries, including in Asia and Africa, to build national, regional and subregional capacity for collection; stockpile management and destruction of illicit small arms and light weapons; import and export controls; disarmament, demobilization and reintegration; and security sector reform.

Regional and subregional dimensions need to be strengthened and emphasized for effective implementation. Most recently, through the Economic Community of West African States, we supported the establishment of national commissions in Sierra Leone, Liberia and Côte d'Ivoire to tackle the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In selecting and implementing projects, we should coordinate more effectively to match the needs of States with available resources and to achieve tangible results.

I would like to touch on another effort to end the illicit trade and to regulate the transfer of small arms. As a non-exporter of weapons, Japan attaches importance to transfer controls to prevent the illicit trade of small arms and light weapons. We therefore support the initiative to promote a comprehensive, legally binding instrument establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms. An arms trade treaty would be a valuable initiative in that regard.

We welcome the fact that the Security Council continues to pay utmost attention to the illicit trade in small arms as one important cause of insecurity, with valuable input from the Secretary-General.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Kenya.

**Mr. Mubari-Muita** (Kenya): Thank you for giving me the floor, Mr. President, and for convening this important open debate on the agenda item on small arms. We also welcome the report of the Secretary-General containing his analysis, observations and recommendations.

My delegation notes with great concern that the ready availability and easy handling of small arms continue to fuel conflicts and undermine development, human rights and security in the world, particularly in Africa. In the African continent small arms could be said to be weapons of mass destruction, judging by the number of deaths that they are directly and indirectly responsible for.

The circulation of and trafficking in small arms and light weapons in the Great Lakes region, the Horn of Africa and all the neighbouring States have played a significant role in undermining peace, intensifying violence and crime and fuelling regional wars. Consequently, all those factors have had harmful socio-economic effects, especially given that security and development are inextricably interlinked. Indeed, at this rate it is little wonder that the African continent may not achieve the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs), due in part to the challenges posed by the problems associated with small arms.

As part of the programme to combat the menace of small arms, the countries of the Great Lakes and the Horn of Africa region issued the Nairobi Declaration in the year 2000, thereby establishing the Secretariat on Small Arms as a regional platform for containing the problem of proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In June 2005 the Third Ministerial Review Conference of the Nairobi Declaration adopted an agreement transforming the Secretariat into the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons (RECSA).

RECSA has done considerable work in coordinating and in assisting member States to implement the United Nations Programme of Action on Small Arms and Light Weapons and relevant resolutions and instruments related to small arms and light weapons. It has also been successful in coordinating interaction with national focal points, regional and international agencies, civil society and research institutions, as well as in capacity-building and information sharing. The political will, ownership and partnership among member States have ensured concrete and practical achievements towards the Centre's noble objectives.

At the national level, the Kenya National Focal Point on Small Arms and Light Weapons, which brings

together government and civil society, is operational, with the assistance of RECSA. Its Secretariat has in the last five years improved its capacity and expanded its mandate to include peacebuilding, conflict management and implementation of the Conflict Early Warning Mechanism of the Intergovernmental Authority on Development, well as promotion of community-based policing.

At the global level, the international community must agree on practical measures to control the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, which continue to cause the death and destabilization of hundreds of thousands of civilians. As part of concrete measures to combat the proliferation of small arms, Kenya, with other like-minded countries, has been at the forefront in supporting the resolution on the arms trade treaty. We deem important that the international community put in place a mechanism for responsible trade in these weapons through a legally binding instrument establishing international standards for the import, export and transfer of small arms. Kenya is convinced that an arms trade treaty is feasible and timely. It is a matter of survival for the communities in our part of the world, and thus I implore other Member States to join in this noble cause.

Further, Kenya reaffirms its support for the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All its Aspects. In this connection, we support the work of the Governmental Group of Experts in their efforts to enhance international cooperation in preventing, combating and eradicating illicit brokering in small arms and light weapons. Kenya urges other Member States to remain actively engaged in efforts to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

In conclusion, I wish to reiterate that in order to address successfully the challenges posed by small arms, a coordinated response at the global, regional, national and local levels is required, and that all delegations need to work together in a spirit of cooperation. This is not an affront to international trade in arms, but a question of being responsible traders and consumers. The safety of communities in regions awash with small arms is crucial, as is, ultimately, the achievement of the internationally agreed objectives, including the MDGs. Time is not on our side.

**The President**: I now call on the representative of Benin.

**Mr. Ehouzou** (Benin) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to extend to you, Mr. President, our sincere congratulations on the work that you have doing over the month of your presidency. Your actions were appreciated in this forum. I would also like to express the great appreciation of the Government of Benin to the Secretary-General for this comprehensive and analytical report on the complex issue of small arms and light weapons, which was introduced to us by Ms. Hannelore Hoppe, Director and Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs.

Small arms and light weapons continue to have a tragic impact on the course of contemporary history. Their steady proliferation makes them a genuine scourge in terms of the large number of human lives that they claim every year. These weapons have become veritable weapons of mass destruction in very real terms. Small arms help to make States fragile. They encourage the emergence of harmful phenomena that hamper the efforts of the international community to advance sustainable human development.

We thank the Secretary-General for having summarized, in his highly instructive report, the bold actions undertaken within the framework of the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. A number of relatively new trends which are highlighted in the report are of the greatest concern to us. I shall cite a few of them in support of my reasoning.

First of all, let us note that small arms production and the potential markets are now closer together. Here, the Secretary-General underscored the increase in craft production outside the legal framework. Let us note also the progressive blurring of the distinction between the trade and the brokering of small arms and of the demarcation line between underdevelopment, instability, fragility, crisis and war, as well as the mixed impact of operations to collect and destroy small weapons. Evidence of this blurring is provided by the situation in various countries where such destruction is taking place.

This state of affairs is linked to the quantity of stocks now in circulation. Here, it is important to adopt effective measures to prevent illicit transfers,

particularly by strengthening control over the end use, which is often an extremely important measure and one that must become a priority for States wishing to effectively contain the proliferation of light weapons.

These observations have guided the approach of the Government of Benin, which has taken an inventory of the craft producers of weapons at the national level and maintains a rigorous oversight of their activities. Those activities are now regulated by a decree and are thus contained within the limits of what is acceptable in terms of existing international standards, at the level of the United Nations and of subregional cooperation, in particular the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS) Convention, the ratification procedure for which is well under way.

Benin fully concurs with the analysis of the Secretary-General regarding the need for an integrated approach in efforts to exert control over the underlying causes and especially the structural causes of conflicts and armed violence, while also dealing effectively with the factors influencing the demand for light weapons. That is the major purpose of resolution 1625 (2005) on conflict prevention, particularly in Africa, which we need to systematically implement, in conjunction with the international instruments now in force and with the actors in this area, while at the same time establishing synergies between security, development and human rights, and taking into account the problem of armed violence in strategies to combat poverty and to promote the rule of law and human security.

Considering the action of the Security Council, we need to underscore the importance of the embargoes imposed on weapons as a means for putting an end to conflicts and facilitating efforts for their ultimate settlement. We welcome the supporting measures adopted by the Security Council to prevail on States to respect and implement embargoes consistently, wherever possible. The effectiveness of such regulation will be strengthened if it includes an appraisal of the effective capacity of the neighbouring States to implement these embargoes in order to establish the required support.

Regarding the social impact of small arms, we welcome the emphasis in the report on attention to the protection of vulnerable individuals affected by armed violence. Benin has contributed through resolution 1612 (2005) in order to establish a framework for protecting children in armed conflicts. Aside from young girls and women, whose specific problems are taken into account in resolution 1325 (2000), we should also pay attention to the situation of the elderly. They suffer greatly as a result of armed conflicts. Particular attention should be paid to their needs, even if they are presumed to be covered by the efforts undertaken for the protection of civilians in armed conflicts.

The international community must find ways of substantially reducing the number of arms currently in circulation in the world by increasingly sensitizing the manufacturing countries and by supporting initiatives to this end. Benin subscribes to the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development and to the African Declaration adopted in Nairobi on 31 October 2007 on the same subject. It is also our view that setting quantitative goals would be most useful.

The next biennial meeting of States to review the Programme of Action of the United Nations on Small Arms and Light Weapons could serve as a framework for an in-depth discussion on this issue. It should also devote particular attention to the weaknesses in the Programme of Action, as noted in the report of the Secretary-General.

Quantitative goals can be made credible by specifically identifying surplus stocks of both arms and ammunition and proceeding to destroy them. The Security Council has an important role to play here, together with the Peacebuilding Commission. The reform of the security sector in vulnerable or post-conflict States would provide an appropriate framework for a systematic international action in this area. That could considerably improve the prospects of mankind in the area of international peace and security.

**The President**: I now call on the representative of Brazil.

**Mr. Tarragô** (Brazil): I am indeed very pleased to see you today, Ambassador Kumalo, at the end of a productive presidency of the Security Council in this month of April.

We are also thankful to Ms. Hannelore Hoppe of the Office of Disarmament Affairs for her presentation of the Secretary-General's report.

The ready availability and the misuse of small arms and light weapons pose a great threat to the security of States. Such weapons exacerbate conflicts,

fuel international terrorism, undermine peacebuilding efforts and contribute to immense suffering. The issue of small arms and light weapons, whether in the context of disarmament, national security or public security or from a humanitarian perspective, must therefore be discussed in all relevant and appropriate forums. The solution to this problem requires the commitment of all States and the assistance of civil society, as well as the necessary inputs of international, regional and subregional entities.

The international community has been working in unison in order to establish effective mechanisms to deal with the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. In this context, attention should continue to be devoted to the process of monitoring the implementation of the measures contained in the Programme of Action of the 2001 Conference.

Our collective experience in implementing the Programme of Action has clearly revealed some of its shortcomings. The ambitious goals of the Programme are still far from being accomplished. They continue to require reinforced commitment and political will from Governments and civil societies. That is particularly important in the light of the upcoming Biennial Meeting to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action. In this respect, we think that many areas have yet to be adequately addressed.

The current report of the Secretary-General brings to light some areas where progress, we believe, can be made. In particular, we welcome the recommendation to develop an international framework for authentication, reconciliation and standardization of end-user certificates. That would be an important step towards improving export and import controls. Enacting, enforcing and strengthening transfers controls is a shared responsibility of all States and an essential measure to prevent the diversion of small arms and light weapons to the illicit market. We firmly believe deliberations on this issue must lead to an international instrument that effectively disciplines the legal trade in conventional arms without interfering with the right of States to manufacture, import, export, transfer and retain such weapons.

The report of the Secretary-General also makes some interesting points that should be highlighted. It notes that the issue of ammunition is not adequately addressed by the Programme of Action or by the international marking and tracing instrument, but it does form a key component of the small arms issue.

We concur with the Secretary-General's assessment that the non-legally binding status of the Programme of Action may imply lower prioritization than is needed. We think that this is also the case with the marking and tracing instrument.

On the issue of the destruction of surplus ammunition and stockpile management, Brazil is aware of the security and safety problems that may arise from inadequate procedures, especially in post-conflict situations. However, the determination of what constitutes surplus quantities is the purview of the competent national authorities, subject to the respective national constitutional and legal systems, as provided for in the Programme of Action.

There is a growing awareness in Brazil regarding the importance of controlling firearms in all aspects, given the impact on public security. In 2004, in collaboration with State governments and organized civil society, the Federal Government launched a major nationwide disarmament campaign aimed at promoting a culture of peace, raising public awareness on the dangers inherent in the possession of weapons and stimulating their voluntary disposal.

Between July 2004 and October 2005, 464,000 guns were collected by the campaign, which has also been considered instrumental in reducing killings. Before the campaign, homicide rates were constantly increasing in Brazil. This trend was reversed in 2004, with a reduction of 12 per cent in that ominous rate from 2003 to 2006. In view of this positive result, the Brazilian Government has recently relaunched the campaign.

At the subregional and regional levels, there have also been important developments. Along with the reinforcement of internal legislative measures, Brazil is progressively strengthening cooperation with its MERCOSUR partners to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

The implementation and further development of the Programme of Action will enhance the importance of multilateral cooperation in addressing global challenges in this field through globally coordinated responses. Despite national efforts, there are still loopholes that allow the diversion of small arms and light weapons to the illegal market. We think much

more remains to be done. For that reason Brazil will continue to work with determination towards achieving the goal of eliminating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons.

**Mr. Briz Gutiérrez** (Guatemala) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to thank you, Mr. President, for convening this open debate. We also thank Ms. Hoppe for her briefing on the report of the Secretary-General.

This debate — which is not the first to be held by Security Council on this topic — is of particular importance in light of the upcoming Third Biennial Meeting of States on the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. While the origin and nature of the Programme of Action were an initiative of the General Assembly, we see the participation of the Security Council with a view to its success as necessary, given its function as the body responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security.

Since 1999, the Council has spoken out on the impact of this phenomenon and the intensity and duration of armed conflicts, and how they undermine peace agreements, generate complications for peacebuilding efforts and increase the vulnerability of civilians. More recently it has spoken out on the humanitarian consequences and their social and economic implications.

In connection to the Recommendation 1 in the report of the Secretary-General, the commitment of Guatemala is shown through its participation in the Central American small arms control programme, which has a regional scope. One of the axes of its work is the exchange of information for control and tracing. This programme has facilitated the exchange of information and cooperation among the member States of the Central American Integration System and has also helped in prevention, combating and eradicating the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons at the borders.

We are concerned that the nature and ambition of the adopted international instrument on marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons do not correspond to the needs to the countries most affected. We hope to be able to meet that goal later. We feel that we should seek better results in other comprehensive provisions of the Programme of Action that still need to be addressed.

The proposal to create baseline inventories with a view to having quantitative indicators for small arms in order to establish measurable goals is timely.

We welcome the reference in the report of the Secretary-General to the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. In April 2007, Guatemala hosted the meeting of Latin American and Caribbean countries to develop a strategy for the implementation of the plan of action, which responds to the mandates of the Geneva Declaration. That meeting was a political effort to place on the development agenda of countries the need for a comprehensive approach to the general problem generated by the proliferation and misuse of small arms.

Annexed to that Declaration was the adopted Declaration of Guatemala on Armed Violence and Development, which would serve as a base for national and regional work to reduce armed violence from a development perspective. Guatemala agreed to be the first pilot country, and the preparatory work is already being done to initiate implementation of the Geneva Declaration on the ground.

The spirit of Recommendation 4 covers one of the main areas of competence of the Security Council in this regard. Accordingly, we believe that a comprehensive approach will require not only decisive and timely imposition of arms embargoes by the Council, but also their strict monitoring. We appreciate the efforts of the sanctions committees and their monitoring machinery to supervise compliance with the measures against the illicit trade in small arms. We are sure that their future work will be strengthened through the inclusion by Member States in their national legislation of measures to prevent violations of the embargoes imposed by the Security Council.

Furthermore, as indicated by the Secretary-General in recommendations 6, 7 and 9, it is important that the Council be able to include elements related to disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes in the mandates of peacekeeping operations, including the destruction of surplus stockpiles. It is encouraging to see that this has already been put into practice, and we welcome the fact that the Council has noted the importance of applying broad international and regional criteria incorporating the social and economic aspects of DDR, including the special needs of women and child soldiers.

At the national level, Guatemala has made a great effort in the implementation of the Programme of Action. In 2004, the National Commission for the Eradication of Illegal Firearms was established with the mandate to formulate, coordinate and implement a national disarmament programme within our State civil security policy. At the subregional and regional levels important progress has also been made. Guatemala was the venue for the preparatory meeting of Latin American and Caribbean countries to review progress on the Programme of Action. The Antigua Guatemala Declaration was adopted at that meeting. It reflected the views of countries to make progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action and to meaningfully address some topics that are not dealt with adequately by the Programme of Action. Unfortunately, the expectations of our Declaration far surpassed the outcome of the 2006 review conference.

The Antigua Guatemala Declaration states that arms and ammunition transfers through illicit brokers pose one of the greatest risks for the diversion of small arms and light weapons to the illicit market, including to non-State actors. Guatemala therefore proposes the adoption of a legally binding instrument on the conventional arms trade. We welcome the establishment and work of the Group of Governmental Experts addressing this issue.

Finally, my delegation believes that the efforts of the international community to address the problem of small arms, as well as the momentum that has been generated in the General Assembly, will be well strengthened through this type of debate. We believe that this will mean additional political thrust for the implementation of the 2001 Programme of Action and will ensure that the United Nations will continue to play a key role in combating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

**The President**: There are still a number of speakers remaining on my list for this meeting. I intend, with the concurrence of the members of the Council, to suspend the meeting until 3 p.m.

*The meeting was suspended at 1 p.m.*

United Nations S/PV.5881 (Resumption 1)

# Security Council

Sixty-third year

*Provisional*

## 5881st meeting

Wednesday, 30 April 2008, 3 p.m.
New York

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|---|---|---|
| *President:* | Mr. Sangqu/Mr. Kumalo | (South Africa) |
| | Belgium | Mr. Belle |
| | Burkina Faso | Mr. Tiendrébéogo |
| | China | Ms. Song Danhui |
| | Costa Rica | Mr. Urbina |
| | Croatia | Mr. Mutavdžić |
| | France | Mr. Badirou-Gafari |
| | Indonesia | Mr. Natalegawa |
| | Italy | Mr. Mantovani |
| | Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | Mr. Dabbashi |
| | Panama | Mr. Troya Aguirre |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Safronkov |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Etherington |
| | United States of America | Mr. DeLaurentis |
| | Viet Nam | Ms. Nguyen Thi Thanh Ha |

## Agenda

Small arms

Report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/258)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-32416 (E)

*The meeting resumed at 3.05 p.m.*

**The President**: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Colombia and the Syrian Arab Republic, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.*

**The President**: I wish to remind all speakers, as indicated this morning, to limit their statements to no more than five minutes, in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

The next speaker inscribed on my list is the representative of the Netherlands, to whom I now give the floor.

**Mr. Majoor** (Netherlands): Thank you, Mr. President, for providing my delegation with the opportunity to participate in this open debate. The recent developments regarding possible arms shipments to Zimbabwe have shown once again how topical this issue is, both in the context of the General Assembly and for the Security Council.

Building on the statement made this morning by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union, I would like to emphasize that we agree with the Secretary-General's analysis of the current state of affairs regarding the issue of small arms. The Netherlands fully supports the recommendations made in his report (S/2008/258), and we are pleased and encouraged by his fresh approach to this important topic. In particular, my delegation welcomes the broad approach to the issue, the connection to capacity-building and development, the focus on improving cooperation between national law enforcement authorities and the inclusion of issues such as ammunition flows and poor end-use verification.

The problems arising from small arms proliferation are still plentiful. We need to continue striving for full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action. We are confident that the upcoming Biennial Meeting of States will propel and steer action on international cooperation, marking and tracing, stockpile management and surplus disposal, and illicit brokering.

The recommendations made by last year's United Nations expert group on illicit brokering, which was chaired by my fellow countryman Mr. Prins — who is sitting next to me — deserve follow-up, while our ambitions for a legal instrument should not be abandoned. And we need to weigh and reweigh our methods of curbing the proliferation of small arms in the light of the knowledge we have gained.

In recent years, the international community has become more aware of the connection between armed violence and development. It is increasingly understood that the problems arising from small arms need to be addressed not as a separate technical issue, but as an issue that is embedded within a broader development approach. The 2005 World Summit Outcome (General Assembly resolution 60/1) is a confirmation, at the highest level, of the new consensus that security and development are intimately linked.

Armed violence has a major impact on the often vulnerable countries that suffer from it, as it affects economies, health sectors, budding democracies and, in general, the fabric of society. To deal with small arms and light weapons effectively is to recognize the myriad ways in which armed violence affects society and to act on it accordingly. If the international community is serious about achieving the Millennium Development Goals — which I believe it is — we need to start looking beyond the efforts directly aimed at achieving those goals and realize that armed violence will thwart any substantial improvement in levels of development.

The Secretary-General recommended that we develop key indicators for the area of small arms and use those to determine a set of measurable goals. In that respect, the efforts in the framework of the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development are

mentioned as being encouraging. The signatories to the Declaration, which come from all regional groups, have started to work on measurability in the field of armed violence and are currently reflecting on the possibility of developing so-called security for development goals. Those goals could be complementary to the Millennium Development Goals and, as such, bridge the gap between security and development.

It is our hope that the understanding of the correlation between armed violence and development will become firmly rooted both in United Nations standards and in international action on small arms proliferation.

**The President**: I give the floor to the representative of Congo.

**Mr. Okio** (Congo) (*spoke in French*): It is a true pleasure for my delegation and me to see you, Sir, presiding at the close of your presidency of the Security Council over this meeting on a subject that is of great importance to us: small arms. Allow me also to point out that, under your presidency, the most important questions affecting our continent have been considered by the Council and Member States. Congo thanks you for that and offers its sincere gratitude to your delegation.

Most present-day conflicts, as the Secretary-General says so well in his report, contained in document S/2008/258, are fought primarily with small arms and light weapons. Africa, the largest dumping ground for such weapons and host to the greatest number of armed conflicts, is without doubt the continent that most suffers the damaging consequences of that scourge.

Hence, this meeting, taking place a few weeks before the third Biennial Meeting to review the 2001 Programme of Action, is most timely. It offers Member States and this organ, primarily responsible for the maintenance of international peace and security, an excellent opportunity to consider appropriate solutions to the threat represented by such weapons in certain parts of the world.

I should like to paraphrase a great French statesman, President Jacques Chirac, as he spoke of another, equally important challenge at the World Summit on Sustainable Development in September 2002 in Johannesburg, South Africa, to the effect that, so long as the threat of small arms and light weapons remains both pressing and ongoing, the world must not look away. A sense of realism demands it of us.

As we all know, the primary role in the struggle against the illicit trade in those weapons belongs to Member States. It is also clear, however, that in addressing that and other challenges, partnerships are equally necessary, particularly when complemented by the coherent action of the United Nations.

My delegation welcomes the many initiatives that have been taken at various levels, including the meetings of experts organized by the Department for Disarmament Affairs and other regional and subregional meetings. We also note with pleasure the decision taken by the States members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), our own subregional organization, at the twenty-fifth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in Sao Tome and Principe in May 2007, to draw up a legal instrument to monitor small arms and light weapons in Central Africa and a code of conduct for defence and security forces. Congo takes this opportunity to appeal to our ECCAS partners to support such projects.

Congo recalls here that the Security Council should, as it has with respect to other issues on its agenda, demonstrate both its determination and its unity by taking active measures to fight the scourge of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, which has incalculable consequences for our peoples. Indeed, the introductory words of Ms. Hannelore Hoppe, Deputy to the High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, as well as paragraphs 5, 6 and 7 of the Secretary-General's report, are sufficiently eloquent concerning its physical, human, material and other consequences. It is therefore unnecessary for me to revisit the harmful effects of the use of those weapons in many countries in conflict.

In the light of all that I have just said, and with respect to our rightful objectives concerning the threat to international peace and security posed by the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons, my delegation should like to make the following comments.

First, the question of small arms and light weapons should be addressed in parallel with that of ammunition in the context of the drafting of a binding legal instrument, which we strongly advocate. Indeed,

the Secretary-General's report notes that "[m]ore than 80 per cent of ammunition trade seems to remain outside of reliable export data" (*S/2008/258, para. 19*). And yet, ammunition is essential to the functioning of those weapons. There is thus a need for joint and well-coordinated action on the part of the international community to monitor the circulation of ammunition and improved stockpile management.

Secondly, the question of the responsibility of the manufacturers of such weapons must be raised with respect to export, transfer, licensing, marking and tracing. Indeed, without the participation of manufacturers and the assistance of the States where they operate, no action by the international community can have the desired results, given the complexity of the present-day structure of the arms trade and the existence of numerous brokers and points of sale.

Thirdly, the issue of respect for embargoes should enjoy greater attention because it has been relentlessly demonstrated that the perpetuation of some conflicts is linked to the ease with which certain illegal armed groups obtain weapons. Respect for embargoes is all the more essential in that it allows us to reduce, to a certain extent, the capacity for harm of illegal groups and to prevent the emergence or resurgence of certain conflicts.

The Secretary-General's 13 recommendations could represent an equal number of steps forward if they were converted into consensual decisions, despite the fact that they do not all go as far as we should have wished, as the representative of the United States pointed out this morning in referring to certification. While we recognize the impact of this debate, we regret that the Security Council has been unable to make a far-reaching decision commensurate with the expectations of peoples throughout the world who are suffering the plague of war.

**The President**: I give the floor to the representative of Iceland.

**Mr. Hannesson** (Iceland): I have the honour today to speak on behalf of the five Nordic countries: Denmark, Finland, Norway, Sweden and Iceland.

It is a well-known fact that small arms and light weapons maim and kill hundreds of thousands of people every year, create fear and insecurity, divert resources needed elsewhere and hinder post-conflict recovery. Security is a precondition for development, and the interlinkages among security issues, humanitarian problems and development are increasingly recognized. Combating and eradicating the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects is therefore fundamental to improving global, regional and national security and necessary social and economic development.

Let me reiterate that the five Nordic countries fully support the efforts to deal with the challenges posed by man-portable air defence systems.

The United Nations Programme of Action of 2001 remains the global framework for cooperative efforts to combat illicit arms. The five Nordic countries firmly support the full implementation of the commitments set out in the Programme of Action.

In doing so, we call for enhanced partnerships with all relevant stakeholders. We call for enhanced cooperation among Governments. All relevant parts of the United Nations family must contribute. In this respect, let me reiterate the importance of the Security Council. It is vital for the Council to address the challenges posed by small arms and light weapons in relation to human security. In this respect, we must fully recognize the gender implications of this threat. Likewise, we believe that the Peacebuilding Commission must take fully into account the complexities in carrying out its task. We cannot achieve progress unless we engage regional institutions. We must further strengthen the partnership with civil society.

The five Nordic countries intend to continue contributing in this joint undertaking. We are ready to provide financial resources, as we have done in recent years. Within the framework of the Nordic-African ministerial meeting, we have met with African colleagues both in Geneva and in New York to discuss specific issues relating to the illicit trade and the proliferation of small arms and light weapons and their negative impact on development in Africa.

We cannot allow the third Biennial Meeting of States under the Programme of Action to fail, as was the case with the 2006 Review Conference. We must aim for a successful third Biennial Meeting that brings the Member States together around the priority issues identified by the Chair-designate and that makes recommendations on improved implementation of the Programme of Action. This will be crucial in order to strengthen international efforts on small arms and light

weapons. A successful third Biennial Meeting will pave the way for more ambitious and more effective global work to combat the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in the coming years.

First, we must take stock of where we stand on the implementation of the 2005 Instrument on marking and tracing. Most of us would have preferred a legally binding instrument. Yet, now the challenge is to ensure that all countries adhere to this politically binding Instrument.

Secondly, the Nordic countries have for years called for more effective international cooperation in addressing the question of brokering in small arms and light weapons. We have advocated an international instrument against illicit brokering. Yet, we note that the recent United Nations Group of Governmental Experts has drawn other conclusions. Our challenge is now to identify practical measures which will make a difference in our common efforts to fight illicit brokering. The recommendations made by the Group of Governmental Experts should form the basis of this discussion during the third Biennial Meeting.

Thirdly, the upcoming third Biennial Meeting, to be held in New York, should also consider national implementation of the Programme of Action. It is therefore vital that all Member States submit their national reports in a timely manner.

Fourthly, we consider civil society, such as non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and academia, to be important partners, both in shaping policy and in implementation. We support enhanced NGO participation in meetings under the Programme of Action, and not least at the upcoming third Biennial Meeting of States.

While the Programme of Action is valuable, we need a legally binding treaty to regulate the arms trade. We look forward to the outcome of the Group of Governmental Experts which has been established to clarify the modalities for an arms trade treaty.

Last year, all the five Nordic countries articulated their views on such a treaty to the Secretariat. From our perspective, an arms trade treaty is feasible, doable and desirable. We are convinced that such as treaty could facilitate the task for the Security Council. We are also of the view that an arms trade treaty should properly capture key dimensions such as human rights, and development and should contribute to a broader humanitarian agenda.

Illicit small arms and light weapons represent a threat to human security, peacebuilding efforts and development. We must forge an even stronger global partnership to combat this menace. The United Nations must be in the lead, but regional institutions play a vital role in our broader international efforts.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Canada.

**Mr. Normandin** (Canada): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, and South Africa for convening this meeting. Canada appreciates the opportunity to participate in this important and timely debate on small arms. I would also like to thank Ms. Hoppe for her briefing.

We welcome the excellent report put forward by the Secretary-General (S/2008/258), and, in particular, its emphasis on the harmful impact of illicit small arms on security, human rights and social and economic development. The recommendations in the report serve as a useful guideline to encourage further action to address the proliferation and misuse of small arms.

Measures to address the impact of illicit small arms must be considered as part of the broader context of promoting international peace and security, including peacebuilding and conflict prevention initiatives. Increased interaction among the various bodies involved in these issues, including the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission, would allow for creative approaches to the small arms issue from a broader perspective. The Secretary-General's report provides useful recommendations on ways to enhance the synergies among those bodies.

Canada applauds the Security Council's work in addressing critical issues such as small arms through targeted sanctions, an important and effective tool of the Security Council. Targeted sanctions have been used to embargo arms sales to conflict zones and to prevent certain armed groups from trading in high-value natural resources, such as diamonds and timber, which can provide the means to finance arms purchases and other conflict-related activities.

We have long sought to improve the effectiveness of sanctions while reducing their humanitarian impact, including during our most recent term on the Security

Council, and have supported a number of studies and other initiatives to that end. Canada is currently working closely with the United Nations Department of Political Affairs to develop an information management system for use by panels of experts monitoring sanctions.

We welcome the Secretary-General's recommendations on possible measures to improve the monitoring of arms embargoes currently mandated by the Security Council and to strengthen practical cooperation between relevant sanctions monitoring groups, peacekeeping missions and Member States. Canada supports the inclusion of United Nations arms embargoes monitoring functions in the mandate of United Nations peacekeeping missions and the recommendation in the Secretary General's report that this task be given to a dedicated unit equipped with the capacity to carry it out comprehensively.

The management of existing stockpiles and the destruction of surplus arms and ammunition must also be a priority for States and the larger international community in order to prevent their diversion for illicit use. Canada has already assisted a number of countries in destroying surplus arms and ammunition. Through the NATO Partnership for Peace Trust Fund, we are also assisting Afghanistan in rendering ammunition stockpiles more secure and improving stockpile management practices.

In order to combat illicit flows of small arms, we must continue to strengthen the global regulatory framework governing small arms transfers.

(*spoke in French*)

In this regard, Canada was heartened by the strong support among Member States for the General Assembly resolution calling for a comprehensive, legally binding instrument, establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms, including small arms. We look forward to the report of the Group of Governmental Experts on the feasibility, scope and parameters of an arms trade treaty.

As stated at the Small Arms Review Conference held in New York in 2006, Canada maintains that strengthening the global framework governing small arms transfers in order to combat illicit flow of small arms and light weapons should not impair the legitimate interests of owners, manufacturers and vendors of legal firearms.

Implementation of regional instruments must also be strengthened in order to stem the illicit flows of small arms, which are frequently traded from one conflict to another in unstable regions. Canada has contributed to a number of initiatives to examine, promote and strengthen the implementation of small arms instruments at the regional and subregional level, especially in Africa and the Americas.

The adoption in 2001 of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects was a major achievement. Ensuring its full implementation will remain a challenge for years to come. The upcoming biennial meeting of States provides an opportunity to take stock of progress in implementing the Programme of Action and to look at challenges that remain. Canada is working with other States, international and regional organizations and civil society to demonstrate that such meetings can be effective and useful to accelerate global action on this critically important issue.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Ecuador.

**Ms. Espinosa** (Ecuador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Mr. President, my delegation would like to thank you for holding this thematic debate, the Secretary-General for his report on small arms and light weapons and particularly Ms. Hoppe for presenting the report.

The United Nations plays a fundamental role when it comes to disarmament and the prevention of conflict. There can be no doubt that we need to strengthen its action in this area, and to improve its internal coordination in order for it to have a greater impact in its work.

My delegation considers that it is a matter of urgency to bring about greater cooperation between the various organs of the United Nations, bearing in mind that the General Assembly is the deliberative forum and that it is the only body that can provide a normative framework to guide the decisions of all States with regard to the subject we are discussing today.

In this respect, my delegation would like to highlight the importance of referring in this debate to the negative effect that illicit small arms have on

security, particularly in countries experiencing a crisis or in a post-conflict situation, and of stressing the work done by the Security Council in these cases.

The efforts undertaken by States and the international community in order to meet the Millennium Development Goals are a matter of priority in order to help reduce sources of tension in countries which are most vulnerable to conflicts. It is for this reason that we reaffirm our belief that in countries in conflict or post-conflict situations we must provide a minimum set of living conditions for the population. Likewise, we also feel it necessary that these efforts be supported by decisive and robust action in order to deal with those that benefit directly from the industry of war and facilitate arms trafficking. However, having said this, we must be clear with regard to the direct link that we wish to attribute to underdevelopment and armed conflict, for, while violence can be exacerbated by poverty, in no circumstances can it be said to be caused by poverty. Urban violence in certain sectors of developing countries does not obey the various norms of social, political and economic inequality and is not related directly to poverty. Instead, it stems from external factors, such as drug trafficking and other transnational crimes. Furthermore, we have seen how the use and abuse of small arms and light weapons in developed countries has led to the loss of innocent lives on a daily basis and caused public massacres.

My delegation takes note of the recommendations provided by the Secretary-General in his report, and we are heartened to learn of the initiatives approved by the Security Council and its sanctions monitoring groups in the work with post-conflict States. We hope that in the future, design and vigilance will be optimized and that the recent progress in disarmament practice, demobilization and reintegration and the security sector reform will continue. In this respect, we must stress that these initiatives should be confined to the current specific cases and should not become general practice or be included as a matter of course in the work of the rest of the United Nations system.

My delegation agrees with the urgency of strengthening practical measures to combat the trafficking in small arms and light weapons and to give the Programme of Action on Small Arms and the International Tracing Instrument the necessary support and the teeth to be successful in achieving its objectives. We are sure that this process will end in the consideration of the recommendations of the Group of Governmental Experts on small arms and light weapons, leading to cooperation between States in the implementation of this legislation.

For Ecuador, this is particularly important, because over the past few years we have experienced the effects of an armed conflict beyond our borders, which has brought in its wake a huge demand for refuge in our country and much immigration. For this reason, my delegation attaches importance to the multilateral discussion of small arms and light weapons and views with concern the proliferation of these kinds of weapons, given their links to violence, terrorism and social disintegration.

In this context, Ecuador is meeting its international obligations, particularly with regard to the Inter-American Convention Against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Ammunition, Explosives, and Other Related Materials, via the national arms control computer system designed by Ecuadorian military engineers. Moreover, as a demonstration of its commitment to the small arms biennial meeting next July, Ecuador will present its report under General Assembly resolution 62/45, adopted in December 2007.

Finally, allow me to reiterate the importance of working together and being able to continue to rely on international cooperation to achieve our disarmament objectives. The national efforts of developing countries in this area can only be successful if the international community continues to provide its support.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Chile.

**Mr. Muñoz** (Chile) (*spoke in Spanish*): Firstly, Mr. President, we would like to thank you for holding this debate on small arms and light weapons. It is a matter of extreme importance for Latin America, as was just said by my colleague from Ecuador. Small arms and light weapons do not themselves cause the conflicts in which they are used, but the ease with which they are obtained and their excessive accumulation tend to worsen those conflicts. Their use claims large numbers of victims, prolongs conflicts and increases the feeling of insecurity among the populations suffering from this scourge. Because they are easy to transport and conceal, they are difficult to control.

Chile has been concerned with controlling small arms and light weapons as well as their ammunition, explosives and related elements. States are the actors that bear the primary responsibility for providing security to populations, which they must do in compliance with the rule of law. In accordance with the guiding principles of human security, Chile assigns to the State the role of protecting fundamental freedoms, which are the essence of life.

My delegation agrees with and supports the agreements and resolutions adopted by the General Assembly with regard to conventional weapons, particularly those related to the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. My country attaches particular importance to the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which provides a good basis for States to incorporate some of its provisions into their national norms. In addition, we look forward with interest to the commencement of negotiations on instruments for tracing illicit small arms, as suggested in the Programme of Action. We believe that to be highly important.

It is also important that States adopt the Programme and that they be able to incorporate into their national legislation all the aspects it covers, in keeping with their national capacities. The international assistance and cooperation provided to States can be an important incentive in the implementation of this and other international instruments.

We are prepared to participate in the third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action, to be held in New York in July, and in the activities that will be carried out in our region to prepare for that event, such as the preparatory meeting for Latin America and the Caribbean, to be held in Bogotá, Colombia, on 17 and 18 June.

My country agrees that the problems related to small arms and light weapons as a source of conflict should be addressed in the Security Council, which is the organ that has responsibility for the arms embargoes and sanctions that it applies to achieve the stabilization of regions in post-conflict situations. If embargoes are to have real impact, the Council must carry out effective monitoring together with the affected State, respecting its national capacities and helping it to develop that capacity if the State does not possess it or has lost it as a result of the conflict. There must also be effective exchange of information among the various actors participating in the control regime, including national authorities and peacekeeping missions as well as international and regional organizations.

The Peacebuilding Commission has an important function in this area. The Commission can play an important role by creating the necessary synergies among United Nations organs so that the countries under consideration in its country-specific configurations can consider including the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, adopted by the Assembly, as well as the related international instruments, as effective tools for peacebuilding in societies emerging from conflict.

The conclusions reached by the Secretary-General in his report on small arms (S/2008/258) are appropriate for the existing international situation and challenge us to continue the efforts to reduce the worldwide circulation of these weapons and to control their illicit trafficking. Chile would like to see the establishment of global and regional norms and agreements prohibiting transfers of weapons and ammunition that cause or spread armed conflicts or that worsen existing ones. Adequate international control, based on an integrated and broad strategy that responds to the challenges posed by the excessive circulation of small arms and light weapons and their illicit trafficking, would undoubtedly contribute to the prevention of threats to international peace and security, to respect for the norms of international humanitarian law and, finally, to the enjoyment of human rights.

**The President**: Before I call on the next speaker, I should like to remind delegations once again to limit their statements to no more than five minutes. The list of speakers has grown, and we want to give everyone a hearing on this matter.

I now call on the representative of Austria.

**Mr. Ebner** (Austria): Austria fully associates itself with the statement made by the representative of Slovenia on behalf of the European Union (EU). I would therefore like to make just the following brief comments.

The availability of and the easy access to small arms and light weapons have terrible consequences, such as crime, terrorism, the destabilization of State structures and societies and national and international conflict. We encounter human rights violations, as well as long-term displacement and poverty. Small arms contribute to undermining the attempts of millions of people to enjoy development opportunities in peace and security.

Together with its EU partners and individually, Austria strives to support the fight against the illicit accumulation of and trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Despite a lack of tangible progress in global efforts against illicit small arms and light weapons in recent years, there have been significant advances at the regional level. We have therefore focused our support on these regional initiatives.

In Africa — the continent most affected by the uncontrolled spread of small arms — Austria supports the strengthening of national and regional legal regimes and capacity-building, as well as practical disarmament measures. We provide funding, totalling more than half a million euros, to a number of critical projects implemented by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa. One such project seeks to curb the illicit brokering of small arms, through the establishment of a regional register of authorized arms dealers in the States that participate in the Small Arms Transparency and Control Regime in Africa. Another project envisages the establishment of a new legal instrument to control the trafficking of small arms and light weapons among Central African States. Yet another project is aimed at supporting the implementation of the Convention on Small Arms of the Economic Community of West African States. Austria has made a long-term commitment to those multi-year projects.

In the Asian and Pacific region, Austria focuses its support on capacity-building as well as on strengthening the rule of law by supporting a project to curb the illicit brokering of small arms and light weapons. That project will be implemented by the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific, in Kathmandu, Nepal.

In our immediate neighbourhood of Eastern Europe and Central Asia, Austria supports the destruction of stockpiles and ammunition, in line with the recommendation, made by the Secretary-General in his recent report (S/2008/258), that the destruction of surplus ammunition stockpiles be made a priority.

We view our financial support for all of these projects as concrete contributions that assist States in implementing the United Nations Programme of Action, as recommended by the Secretary-General in his recent report.

Before concluding, let me briefly mention the valuable contribution of the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE). Its contributions to standard-setting are well recognized and comprise, inter alia, a landmark document: the Handbook of Best Practices on Small Arms and Light Weapons. Besides norm-setting, the OSCE places priority on assistance to affected States and on weapons destruction.

Austria supports continued attention by the Security Council to the overarching problem of illicit small arms and light weapons. Furthermore, we look forward to the third Biennial Meeting to consider the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action, to be held in July. We welcome the determination that exists at the regional level to move forward in the fight against small arms and light weapons. At the same time, the continuation of a small arms and light weapons process at the global level remains indispensable. After all, in our interconnected world, the human security of all of us depends on it.

**The President**: I now call on the representative of Peru.

**Mr. Voto-Bernales** (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am pleased to commend you, Sir, on the last day of your second presidency of the Security Council. I welcome your initiative to convene this open debate of the Security Council on small arms, a matter of great importance to the international community.

We also thank the Secretary-General for his valuable report.

In addressing the serious problem of small arms and light weapons and ammunition, we must consider the issue comprehensively, taking supply and demand into account. From that dual perspective, the adoption in 2005 of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons, was a most positive measure. In conjunction with the 2001 United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and

Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, it represents substantial progress in our approach to the subject.

However, we would have wished the Instrument to be legally binding, include the aspect of ammunition, set out specific goals and facilitate assistance and cooperation among States. We hope that the report of the Panel of Governmental Experts will soon spark negotiations on a legally binding international treaty on small arms and light weapons.

The dimensions of the problem are reflected in the assessment that more than 875 million small arms and light weapons are in circulation. It is worrisome to note that this category of weapons is subject to the fewest registers because most are in private hands. When we match such data with the increase of violence in conflict zones, armed crime, the activities of insurgent groups that challenge legitimate democracies, and other phenomena that claim countless victims and foment social and political instability, it is clear that we need coordinated international measures to exercise greater control over the illicit trade in and circulation of small arms and light weapons.

No threat arising from weapons of mass destruction should allow us to neglect the fact that small arms and light weapons cause thousands of deaths every day throughout the world and are wielded against peace, security and human rights in myriad forms. Stopping or reducing that illicit trade is therefore not just a moral imperative that cannot be shirked by the manufacturing States and to which all States must contribute. Above all, it is a shared responsibility deriving from the United Nations Charter itself, whereby we have undertaken to maintain peace and security and to take effective collective measures to prevent and eliminate all threats. That will be possible only if we proceed to adopt a series of common and mandatory measures.

I should like to reiterate that small arms and light weapons constitute the only category of arms that is not under the exclusive control of States. Their manufacture, trade and use are also in private hands. However, the primary responsibility for controlling the flow of arms lies with States, be they manufacturers, exporters, re-exporters, importers or transit points. In that respect, the Secretary-General has proposed some measures that we endorse and which should be given due attention by States as soon as possible. In particular, we must work to standardize end-user certification, reduce the excessive accumulation of ammunition, and develop assistance and cooperation to enhance States' capacities to halt the proliferation of small arms, light weapons and ammunition.

Such measures should complement the work of the Security Council in monitoring arms embargoes; strengthening synergies between embargoes and the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants; and developing practical measures for cooperation between the sanctions monitoring groups of the Security Council, peacekeeping missions, Member States and their investigating authorities, and the relevant regional and international organizations.

Finally, we believe it important that the Security Council has decided to address the serious problem of small arms and light weapons on a biennial basis as of this year.

**The President**: I give the floor to the representative of the Philippines.

**Mr. Davide** (Philippines): The Philippines commends the presidency of the Security Council for organizing this debate on the important and urgent need to address the problem of the proliferation and illegal trafficking of small arms and light weapons.

Among the many types of armaments that are available in today's global arms market, small arms and light weapons, although not the most lethal and destructive, because of the prevalence and openness of their use throughout the world have killed and maimed and struck fear into millions of people and will continue to do so unless controlled. Those killings have brought untold fear, suffering and misery to the affected families and loved ones, as well as relatives and friends.

Worse yet, so many small arms and light weapons have been produced — and there seems to be no limit or end to such production — by and/or in different countries throughout the years. Since those weapons can easily be transported and are less expensive, they are bound to proliferate, especially since they can be used in times of both peace and conflict, for good or bad.

The Philippines recognizes the fear, suffering, misery and pain brought upon innocent peoples by small arms and light weapons. The harm they have brought to entire populations is immeasurable. The

Philippines believes that it is imperative for all States Members of the United Nations to account for their stockpiles of small arms and light weapons and to ensure that they do not fall into the hands of irresponsible persons, such as criminals, or groups, such as terrorists, that espouse a culture of death or cause the aggravation of conflicts for the ascendancy of their anti-social ends or causes.

Thus, the Philippines has complied with General Assembly resolution 62/47 on the implementation of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons and of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

The Philippines considers the marking of firearms with a unique identifier to be an essential element in preventing their illegal transfer. All firearm manufacturers in my country are required to mark their products. Government authorities, such as the Philippine National Police, the Armed Forces of the Philippines and others, only use small arms and light weapons that are properly marked.

By legislation through Presidential Decree 1866, as amended by Republic Act 8294, the Philippines requires licensed manufacturers of small arms and light weapons to apply an appropriate and reliable marking system on each weapon as an integral part of the production process. The Philippines maintains comprehensive records on the manufacture and distribution of small arms and light weapons. The Firearms and Explosives Division of the Philippine National Police meticulously records all data on confiscated, captured, surrendered and deposited small arms and light weapons. That agency has upgraded its firearm management information system, which allows for the identification and verification of the routes and destinations of small arms and light weapons.

On the other hand, the Philippines has thrown its full might against illegal arms manufacturers in the country, both through tighter laws that impose heavy imprisonment penalties even for the manufacture of parts only, and through new regulations and stricter administrative procedures.

The Philippines has made progress in the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. It maintains appropriate partnerships with the local firearms industry, private security providers, gun clubs and civil society. The country has several laws to prevent the illicit transfer of small arms and light weapons, such as Republic Act 8294, which codifies the laws on the illegal and unlawful possession, manufacture, dealership, acquisition or disposition of firearms, ammunition or explosives. Based on our national legislation, the term "firearms" is used in an even stricter sense than the definition in the Programme of Action. Also pending in the Philippine Senate are SB No. 1615, entitled "Act to Prohibit Certain Firearms Especially Useful to Terrorists", and SB No. 837, entitled "An Act Defining the Crime of Firearms Smuggling, Providing Penalties Therefor and for Other Purposes", among others.

The Philippines observed Small Arms Destruction Day in July 2007 by destroying thousands of confiscated or surrendered firearms. It is reported that over 50,000 more captured small arms and light weapons are scheduled to be destroyed by the Armed Forces of the Philippines at its supply units.

The Philippines submits that full and unrelenting cooperation with the United Nations system on the issue under consideration is of paramount importance. Hence, in addition to what I have just stated, the Philippines is undertaking appropriate measures to prevent exports of small arms and light weapons that would violate sanctions issued by the United Nations or contravene bilateral, regional or multilateral commitments on the non-proliferation of small arms and light weapons. It shares information on illicit transfers with like-minded States through international instruments, such as the Agreement on Information Exchange and Establishment of Communication Procedures. On the export and import of small arms and light weapons, the Philippines ensures that there is control over the use of end-user certificates or letters of intent. The Philippines also does not re-export or retransfer previously imported small arms and light weapons.

In conclusion, the Philippines will always be prepared and ready to contribute to and join the global fight against illicit transfers of small arms and light weapons so as to save lives and reduce the human misery and suffering caused by those weapons. International cooperation and sharing of information are key factors if we are to effectively combat and

eliminate that international problem. A nation acting alone, without the cooperation, assistance and support of others, particularly those with large stockpiles of small arms and light weapons, would be helpless; its efforts would be futile. All nations must work together and remain in concord and solidarity to achieve decisive, positive results in solving the problem. The time to do so cannot be delayed a moment longer.

**The President**: I give the floor to the representative of Switzerland.

**Mr. Baum** (Switzerland) (*spoke in French*): I thank you, Sir, for having convened this open debate on small arms.

Switzerland welcomes the report of the Secretary-General on small arms and the recommendations contained therein. We appreciate the holistic approach of the report and agree with its analysis, in particular on the impact of armed violence on human security, human rights and social and economic development.

The United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is key. Switzerland will continue to support its full and comprehensive implementation. The upcoming Biennial Meeting of States will give us the opportunity to review the achieved results and to further enhance our implementation efforts. In that context, particular attention should be given to the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Despite the efforts undertaken to date, the problem of the illicit trade in light weapons remains acute. We need to continue to act in light of experience on the ground.

In recent years, intensive research has been undertaken into the links between security and development. The findings confirm, as the Secretary-General's report notes, that armed violence represents a major constraint to achieving the Millennium Development Goals because it diverts means and resources.

Convinced of the importance of addressing the problems arising from armed violence in a broader development approach, Switzerland, together with other like-minded countries, launched in June 2006 the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. Open to all States, the initiative has already been endorsed by more than 70 countries, which have committed themselves to achieving measurable reductions in the global burden of armed violence, as well as tangible improvements in human security, by 2015. In view of today's debate, the Geneva Declaration, as well as a short briefing note, were distributed in advance to all Member States.

Switzerland is pleased to note that the Secretary-General recommends in his report the identification of key indicators for the area of small arms. Such indicators should serve as a basis for setting the measurable goals needed to achieve progress in the fight against the scourge of armed violence. In particular, we share the Secretary-General's view that developing measurable goals on armed violence towards 2015 will offer the opportunity to integrate security-related themes in the follow-up to the Millennium Development Goals.

In that respect, I would like to mention that the core group of States promoting the implementation of the Geneva Declaration — which is coordinated by Switzerland — is developing a measurability methodology in the field of armed violence. The core group has also initiated discussions in view of developing security for development goals. We hope that this work will support the United Nations efforts.

**The President**: I give the floor to the representative of Nigeria.

**Mr. Onemola** (Nigeria): On behalf of the Nigerian delegation, I wish to convey our appreciation for the opportunity to participate in the Security Council's open debate on small arms.

I thank the Secretary-General for his report, contained in document S/2008/258 of 17 April 2008. The report highlights various aspects of the issue of small arms, with emphasis on the negative impact that illicit small arms continue to have on security, human rights and socio-economic development, in particular in areas of crisis and in post-conflict situations. The issues raised remain a major challenge to the international community and require multidimensional responses.

The complexity of the issue of small arms challenges the mandate of the United Nations. Nigeria would therefore continue to support the collective action of Member States to advance the achievements

made since the adoption of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects in 2001. However, if the Programme of Action is to be successfully implemented, there is a need to integrate national, subregional and regional strategies to complement the international dimension of the problem. In addition, collaborative efforts between the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Peacebuilding Commission in integrating a framework related to the issue of small arms and light weapons should be devised.

Nigeria remains convinced that the best and most effective strategy for achieving our goals is through the elaboration of a legally binding global instrument to stem the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms, including the full implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. We further believe in the development and implementation of other international instruments, such as the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime; the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons; and instruments on trade, brokering and end use. The United Nations Register of Conventional Arms and Security Council embargoes should also be included.

Furthermore, we reiterate Nigeria's support for the enforcement of Council resolutions on arms embargoes and believe that the maximum cooperation of Member States in providing requisite information on violation of those embargoes would strengthen the common resolve to address the problem. It is not insignificant in that regard to point out the role of producers in furnishing accurate data on their trade in those weapons with Member States.

Nigeria also wishes to emphasize the importance of ensuring the effective collection of weapons, their storage and destruction in post-conflict situations in the context of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programmes. The inclusion of DDR programmes in the peacekeeping mandate for States emerging form conflict situations will serve the early integration of the affected States. We are confident that those programmes will continue to form part of future mandates of peacekeeping operations in order to avoid relapses into conflict.

The adoption of the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons is indicative of what can be achieved when political will is backed by action. For the Nigerian Government, that could only be a stopgap measure. We reiterate that only a legally binding international instrument on the transfer of small arms and light weapons would satisfy the yearnings and aspirations of victim States and peoples. We appreciate General Assembly resolution 60/81 of 8 December 2005 establishing a group of governmental experts to enhance international cooperation on brokering.

We are pleased to note that the group of governmental experts set up pursuant to resolution 61/89 of 6 December 2006, entitled "Towards an arms trade treaty: establishing common international standards for the import, export and transfer of conventional arms", has commenced its deliberations, and we await its findings.

Nigeria's efforts in those matters are reflected in its firm commitment to regional cooperation, as well as to the implementation, jointly with other countries in the subregion of the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), of the ECOWAS Convention on Small Arms. Together with States members of the Community, we have converted the moratorium into a legally binding instrument. We trust that the support of the international community for those efforts will remain strong. That, in the end, would constitute for our countries an endorsement of the path that our leaders have chosen to tread, as well as a contribution to peace, security, stability and development in our region.

Let me conclude my remarks by emphasizing the need to strengthen international cooperation, assistance and capacity-building. We hope that we can count on our international development partners in that regard.

Finally, we want to thank the Security Council and South Africa for convening this meeting.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Kazakhstan.

**Ms. Alzhanova** (Kazakhstan): Let me start by expressing our gratitude to you, Sir, for convening this

important debate on the problem of small arms. I would also like to commend Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon for his report in document A/2008/258, which contains, in particular, recommendations for this Council that in our view can play a significant role in tackling the destabilizing accumulation and illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons.

My delegation fully shares the concern that, as stated in the report under consideration, illicit small arms have a negative impact on security, human rights and social and economic development, in particular in areas of crisis and in post-conflict situations. The accumulation, illicit manufacture, trade and circulation of small arms nurture inter-State conflicts as well as civil wars, terrorism, organized crime and gang warfare, thereby undermining the sustainability of international peace and security.

Kazakhstan recognizes the need to develop legally binding international documents regulating the production, stockpiling, marking and tracing of small arms and light weapons and related illicit brokering, as well as achieving effective monitoring and compliance with United Nations arms embargoes.

In that context, we advocate strengthening and further developing such international mechanisms on small arms and light weapons as the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects; the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons; the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms; and the United Nations System for the Standardized Reporting of Military Expenditures. As duly pointed out by the Secretary-General in his report, the revitalization of the Coordinating Action on Small Arms can improve coordination on that issue within the United Nations system.

The delegation of Kazakhstan supports the United Kingdom's initiative on universal standards in the sphere of transfers of conventional weapons and is of the view that additional mechanisms of multilateral consultations would help to fill in the gaps in order to reach consensus among Member States.

We express our hope that this open debate will significantly contribute to the productive work of the upcoming Third Biennial Meeting of States to consider the implementation of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. The timely submission of national reports on the implementation of the Programme of Action would facilitate effective preparations for and the process of the third Biennial Meeting.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Australia.

**Ms. Lisson** (Australia): I thank you, Sir, for organizing today's debate. Australia welcomes the opportunity to participate, thanks the Secretary-General and congratulates him on his latest report on small arms. It marks a welcome return of this important issue to consideration by the Council. Recognizing the significant and interlinked arms control, humanitarian, peacebuilding and development aspects inherent in the issue, we urge the Council to continue to make an active contribution towards combating the illicit proliferation of small arms and light weapons in all its aspects.

We recognize that the Council cannot work on its own in addressing the small arms threat. It is critical that all Member States continue to work actively to implement the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, including the International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons.

Australia is also committed to working with regional partners and civil society to address the challenge of illicit small arms proliferation in the Asia-Pacific region. Recognizing, as noted in the Secretary-General's report, that leakage from official stockpiles is a significant source of illicit weapons, Australia has taken practical measures to assist regional States, at their request. Through its Defence Cooperation Programme, Australia provides assistance on matters such as the construction and refurbishment of official armouries and magazines, support for training in firearms and armoury maintenance and accountability, and identification and destruction of surplus weapons. Similar work is also undertaken to assist regional police forces.

The challenges presented by unstable and conflict-prone environments highlight the urgent need for the international community to improve the effectiveness of its assistance in restoring access to

justice and security. The intrinsic link between peacebuilding and development and a secure enabling environment is acknowledged and promoted as a key contribution to the effectiveness of development cooperation. However, as noted by the Secretary-General in his report, "key quantitative indicators ... should be developed and used as a base against which to set measurable goals" (*A/2008/258, recommendation 2, p. 15*) in order to facilitate effective project development and evaluation.

In March, Australia funded a United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research activity facilitating the matching of needs to resources for the effective implementation of the Programme of Action on small arms and light weapons in the Pacific region. That study will develop a mechanism to help States identify their priorities for small arms assistance and communicate those priorities to potential donors. We encourage Member States to take advantage of the results of the study when they are released later in the year.

The Australian Government places a high priority on preventing the illicit trade in not only small arms, but all conventional weapons. To that end, we are proud to be one of the authors of General Assembly resolution 61/89, "Towards an arms trade treaty". We are encouraged by the spirit of cooperation displayed at the first meeting of the Group of Government Experts in February, and anticipate further progress on examining the scope, feasibility and parametres of an arms trade treaty at subsequent meetings in May and July.

Australia believes that some forms of small arms and light weapons pose such a significant threat in unauthorized hands that they should be subject to specific transfer controls. In 2005, Australia announced an initiative to address the threat posed to civil aviation by man-portable air defence systems (MANPADS). Our initiative has sought to encourage practical implementation of existing controls over the manufacture, storage and transfer of MANPADS and related equipment, training, and technology to prevent the illicit transfer of MANPADS to terrorists and other non-State groups. These efforts culminated in General Assembly resolutions that Australia coordinated in 2004, 2005 and 2007. We will continue to work with all interested Member States in a variety of forums to address this particular aspect of illicit small arms proliferation.

Finally, Australia strongly supports initiatives for reflecting this practical approach in our formal discussions on the Programme of Action. We warmly welcome the proposals put forward by the Chair-designate of the next Biennial Meeting of States Parties, Ambassador Čekuolis of Lithuania, for focused, structured, detailed and results-oriented discussions. We also agree that the specific themes identified for the Meeting represent a strategic focus on key areas of the Programme of Action, which will facilitate fruitful and targeted discussion. We look forward to working closely with the Chair, the facilitators and all other Member States to achieve concrete outcomes in July.

**The President**: I give the floor next to the representative of Sri Lanka.

**Mr. Kariyawasam** (Sri Lanka): Let me thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate on this important issue, which begs for the attention of the international community because of its impact not only on peace and security, but also on the well-being of societies in several parts of the world. The Secretary-General's report on small arms, in document S/2008/258, is a stark reminder of the adverse impact of small arms and light weapons. It contains valuable information and several worthy recommendations.

As stated in the report, most of the present-day conflicts are fought primarily with small arms and light weapons. Though the weapons may be small, they cause mass destruction in terms of their effects in many parts of the world. They are the weapons of choice in several intra-State conflicts and are used by terrorists and criminal gangs who gain easy access to those weapons and connected ammunition.

In most situations, unbridled violence unleashed by the use of those weapons affects civilians as well. And it has become evident that one primary cause that engenders and sustains conflicts resulting in violence affecting civilians is the uncontrolled proliferation of small arms and light weapons. We recall that in 2001, in recognition of this fact, the Members of the United Nations launched by consensus the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. However, even that Programme failed to recognize the one major cause driving conflicts and spreading terrorism worldwide. That is the reality of

easy availability of, access to and illicit possession of small arms and light weapons by non-State actors.

The involvement of non-State actors, who often thrive on the power of the bullet to settle political scores, ostensibly fighting for political aspirations, is yet to receive adequate attention in most international forums. For instance, the issue of non-State actors was not adequately addressed by the United Nations at the time the Programme of Action was adopted in 2001. Therefore the 2006 Review Conference of the Programme of Action was seen by a very large number of States as an opportunity to strengthen the Programme through further agreements that would expand its scope on important issues, such as action against non-State actors, that were left unresolved in 2001. Regrettably, however, the Review Conference neither made progress in that direction nor was able to agree on adequate global measures for the Programme's full implementation, simply due to the intransigence of a few, defying an emerging global consensus.

The Secretary-General's report once again provides useful information to enable us to address several issues that could help the international community come to terms with the scourge of illicit trafficking and trade in small arms and light weapons. This is the core issue in achieving success in any endeavour to cope with and mitigate the adverse impact of the proliferation of small arms. Illegal possession of small arms and light weapons by non-State actors is an attendant issue that cannot be left out in any meaningful discussion of this issue.

Sri Lanka, like several other countries in Asia, Africa and Latin America, suffers from violence and terrorism perpetrated by a non-State actor using ill-gotten small arms and light weapons and ammunition. This terrorist group wreaks havoc in some parts of the country, and their campaign of terror has continued unabated despite all efforts by the Government to seek a solution to the conflict by political means of dialogue and democratic accommodation. All such efforts have failed, primarily as a result of the phenomenon of illicit trafficking and trade in small arms and light weapons, which make it easy for this misguided terrorist group to sustain their campaign of violence and keep faith in the bullet rather than the ballot.

In this context, Sri Lanka joins other concerned parties in appealing to the international community to take urgent action by all available means to stem the flow of weapons into the hands of non-State actors like terrorist groups who do not respect internationally accepted civilized norms and conduct. Unbridled violence and abominable terrorist acts can be stopped only if the supply of and access to such weapons can be halted immediately.

Weapons and ammunition should be held only by legal entities and States who are responsible to the international community for their conduct under international law and treaty regimes that govern good conduct and respect for human rights and humanitarian law. It is important, therefore, to ensure that any measure taken by the United Nations and its Member States to curb the proliferation of small arms and light weapons does not affect the rights of a State to procure and hold arms to ensure the safety of its citizens.

In this regard, while commending the Secretary-General and the Office of High Representative for Disarmament Affairs for their efforts so far, we urge action by all States, together with the United Nations, to fully implement the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trafficking and Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons. However, we are convinced that to make a difference on the ground in terms of preventing or mitigating conflicts and violence as well as for combating terrorism, much more needs to be done in terms of eradicating illicit trafficking and trade in small arms by non-State actors. Therefore, the time has come for this Council and the United Nations to expand their scope of action towards preventing small arms and ammunition ending up in the wrong hands. If we fail, violence and terrorism will continue to affect several vulnerable regions and societies worldwide. Our choice is simple. Either we act meaningfully now, or continue business as usual to our own peril.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Malawi.

**Mr. Matenje** (Malawi): Let me begin by congratulating you, Mr. President, on your presidency of the Security Council for the month of April and by thanking you for the initiative to hold this debate and giving me the opportunity to address the Council.

We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on small arms, which highlights adequately the problems associated with small arms and light weapons.

Over recent years Malawi has witnessed an increased and alarming flow of small arms and light weapons into the country from conflict-afflicted areas, particularly in Africa. The use of such weapons, illegally brought into Malawi, has destroyed lives and livelihoods, bred insecurity of person and property and caused fear and horror among the people in various ways. That has in turn imposed enormous costs on the Government, on communities and on individuals, and has had a profoundly negative impact on socio-economic and human development in the country, particularly in the rural areas, where economic activities have been greatly affected by armed crime and violence. Ordinary people in rural communities have lost valuable property and lives to criminals armed with small arms or light weapons. Many have been maimed or injured and are no longer able to freely conduct their economic activities without the threat of armed violence.

Freedom from the threat of violence is a basic human right and a precondition for social, economic and human development, and the dignity and well-being of all people. In that regard, in the 2005 World Summit Outcome Document, our heads of State and Government recognized the linkage between development, peace, security and human rights and its impact on the achievement of the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals.

Accordingly, Malawi calls upon the international community, led by the United Nations, to intensify its efforts in assisting to remove illegal arms from African countries and to prevent armed violence in order to help Africa achieve the internationally agreed development goals, including the Millennium Development Goals, in a peaceful and secure environment. After all, the vast majority of arms used to commit armed violence and armed conflict come from outside Africa. Africa can no longer afford the cost of armed conflict or allow armed conflict to continue to hold back economic growth and the livelihoods of its people.

In her foreword to briefing paper 107, entitled "Africa's missing billions", published by the International Action Network on Small Arms, Oxfam and Saferworld and launched on 11 October 2007, President Ellen Johnson-Sirleaf of Liberia summarizes the immeasurable loss of development occasioned by armed violence and conflict in Africa in these words:

> "This is money Africa can ill afford to lose. The sums are appalling: the price that Africa is paying could cover the cost of solving the HIV and AIDS crisis in Africa, or provide education, water and prevention and treatment for TB and malaria. Literally thousands of hospitals, schools, and roads could have been built, positively affecting millions of people. Not only do the people of Africa suffer the physical horrors of violence, armed conflict undermines their efforts to escape poverty."

In that regard, Malawi views the unregulated manufacture and supply of small arms and light weapons as a real threat to peace, security and development. It is for those reasons that Malawi endorsed the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development, which emerged from a summit hosted by Switzerland and the United Nations Development Programme in June 2006.

Furthermore, we also associate ourselves with the efforts of the international community to establish an effective international regime to regulate the manufacture and transfer of small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. We believe that the unregulated availability of small arms and light weapons leads to a breakdown of the rule of law, democracy and legitimate State structures.

Accordingly, we support ongoing efforts towards the elaboration of an arms trade treaty aimed at ending the illicit manufacture of and trade in small arms and light weapons and their ammunition. We believe that this is a significant step towards the standardization of international trade in conventional arms and ensuring that small arms and light weapons do not end up in the wrong hands and are not used for illegal activities. It is therefore our hope that the arms trade treaty will control both the supply of and demand for conventional weapons. In that regard, we call upon African Governments, arms-producing countries and the rest of the international community to vigorously and proactively support international discussions to achieve a robust arms trade treaty to ensure that Africa is protected from armed violence.

In the meantime, we support all the efforts being made in the implementation of the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects.

In conclusion, we commend the Peacebuilding Commission for its integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and its central role in addressing the problem of armed violence and conflict in Africa.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Liechtenstein.

**Mr. Frommelt** (Liechtenstein): We welcome the report of the Secretary-General on small arms and light weapons and commend you, Sir, for organizing this timely and important open debate. We hope that it constitutes the resumption of the leadership role of the Council on this topic.

The enormous socio-economic costs caused by small arms and small light weapons are one of the big obstacles to the efforts of many countries to reach the Millennium Development Goals, and the topic thus has very wide ramifications. Small arms and light weapons are widely used in inter-State and intra-State conflicts by Government armies, paramilitaries and rebel forces. In situations outside of armed conflicts, they are the weapons of choice of organized crime groups and criminal gangs.

The numbers speak for themselves. Small arms and light weapons kill at least 300,000 people a year in both conflict and non-conflict situations, and are responsible for 60 to 90 per cent of direct conflict deaths. Some 640 million small arms and light weapons, which are frequently exchanged between various conflicts, are already in circulation. Another 8 million new weapons enter the market every year. With all the attention paid to weapons of mass destruction, the weapons with the most lethal impact are small arms.

The proliferation of small arms and light weapons can be regarded as a cluster of related problems stretching from the illicit trade and transfer of weapons to production, ammunition and brokering. We believe that strict domestic brokering legislation is a prerequisite for effective international cooperation in that area and adopted such legislation in 1999. But better control should not be limited to brokering activities; it should also encompass the physical transfer of small arms and light weapons. Such control of arms transfers should be based on international standards, which prohibit in particular the transfer of small arms and light weapons to end users who do not respect international human rights and humanitarian law. We therefore support all efforts geared towards an international framework for authentication, reconciliation and standardization of end-user certificates. The improvement of end-user certificates for man-portable air defence systems could set an important precedent in that regard.

The adoption of an international instrument on marking and tracing was an important step towards achieving a comprehensive regime in the global fight against the spread of small arms and light weapons. The use of the new politically binding International Instrument to Enable States to Identify and Trace, in a Timely and Reliable Manner, Illicit Small Arms and Light Weapons should, however, not be limited to Member States. If it were incorporated into the mandates of future peacekeeping missions, it could significantly reduce the number of small arms and light weapons available in conflict and post-conflict situations.

Although the International Tracing Instrument includes provisions for marking new weapons production, Government stocks and imports, it does not cover the marking or tracing of ammunition. That shortfall contradicts the main purpose of the Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, which, as its name suggests, is to address the issue of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons in all its aspects. We therefore believe that the question of ammunition must also be addressed over time. Here, the safeguarding of ammunition warehouses and the destruction of surplus stockpiles should be among the priorities of relevant peacekeeping missions and an initial part of any peacebuilding effort.

The link between small arms, violence and lack of development is undeniable. Moreover, the direct and indirect human, social and economic costs of armed violence are tremendous. Halting the spread of small arms and light weapons would therefore make an important contribution to the achievement of the Millennium Development Goals.

In that regard, Liechtenstein supports multilateral initiatives beyond the United Nations framework and commends those States that have adopted the Geneva Declaration on Armed Violence and Development. Given our belief that effective arms embargoes depend upon the removal of arms from circulation within the embargoed State and that the problem of small arms

and light weapons cannot be solved by arms control measures alone, we will further support activities in the field of the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of former combatants.

**The President**: I now call on the representative of Jamaica.

**Mr. Wolfe** (Jamaica): The Jamaican delegation welcomes the opportunity to participate in this open debate on an agenda item that is of critical importance to the international community. We view this debate as a chance for the international community to renew its focus and commitment with regard to ending the catastrophic consequences caused by small arms and to garnering the political will necessary to create and implement the appropriate measures to curb the illicit trafficking of these weapons. In that connection, my delegation welcomes the report of the Secretary-General to this body contained in document 5/2008/258, dated 17 April 2008.

Jamaica reaffirms its commitment to the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects and continues to work towards effectively implementing its provisions through our domestic legislation. To further consolidate that position, we have ratified related international conventions, including the United Nations Firearms Protocol.

At the same time, however, Jamaica continues to be concerned at the lack of progress towards curbing the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Indeed, while we acknowledge that a few steps have been taken in the right direction with regard to specific areas of the Programme of Action, my delegation remains strongly of the view that, if we are to achieve meaningful and sustainable outcomes to the Programme of Action, great emphasis must also be placed on the area of ammunition.

In taking stock of the implementation of the Programme of Action, we are also of the conviction that the global effort should also focus on the need to examine how implementation can be made more relevant, given that the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is still prevalent seven years after the Programme of Action was adopted. That will, of course, necessitate consideration of an approach that would encompass the wider work and activities of the United Nations. In that regard, we look forward to the upcoming third Biennial Meeting of States to Consider the Implementation of the Programme of Action.

As noted in the Secretary-General's report, the illicit proliferation of small arms facilitates a wide array of human rights violations, relating to murder; rape and other forms of sexual violence; kidnapping; torture; and the trafficking of persons, including children. We fully agree that, where armed violence becomes the established means for resolving grievances and conflicts, legal and peaceful dispute resolution mechanisms could in fact be eroded, consequently posing severe difficulties for upholding the rule of law and ensuring the dispensation of justice. In such scenarios, the devastating effects of illicit small arms and light weapons are usually felt most by the vulnerable in our societies, including women and children, and ultimately challenge the development priorities of States by causing the diversion of efforts aimed at attaining the Millennium Development Goals.

It is indeed not surprising that the Small Arms Survey informs us that much more is known about the number of nuclear warheads, stocks of chemical weapons and transfers of major conventional weapons than about small arms. The international community has failed to respond to this alarming threat, especially where it affects developing countries and where the real impact of these weapons, in terms of criminal, gang-related and narco-trafficking activities, is felt daily at an astounding level. If we are to reverse that trend, it is important that all Member States cooperate and engage in meaningful action, including the exchange of information among law enforcement authorities, and implement such measures as will lead to a reduction in the illegal trade of the approximately 875 million small arms and light weapons reported to be currently in circulation globally.

Since 2001, our efforts in Jamaica, with the assistance of our partners, to reduce the volume of illegal guns and ammunition on our streets, have met with some success. My delegation would like to take this opportunity to express our appreciation for the assistance provided to Jamaica at the bilateral and regional levels, which has allowed for the implementation of the Programme of Action in areas such as the provision of training for legal officers, policy-makers and law enforcement and customs officials. We also express our gratitude to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace, Disarmament and Development in Latin America and the Caribbean for

its assistance in training programmes for law enforcement officials. We certainly look forward to continued cooperation and support in other areas as we seek to comprehensively implement the Programme of Action.

Jamaica hereby reiterates its call for the international community to work resolutely and steadfastly towards the adoption of a legally binding instrument to enable States to identify and trace illicit small arms and light weapons. At the same time, with the constant changes in global patterns of the supply of small arms and light weapons, there is an equal need for the international community to examine and come to terms with the problem of illicit brokering — a situation that presents the greatest risk of the diversion of these weapons to the underground market and consequently into illegal hands. As stated by the Secretary-General in paragraph 14 of his report, "it is of the highest significance that countries enact effective laws and regulations to govern this wide spectrum of present-day arms brokering". My delegation welcomes that very important and timely injunction by the Secretary-General, which emphasizes the need for the international community to proceed to take urgent action in this critical area.

The nexus between small arms and light weapons and ammunition is indissoluble. Accordingly, while paying due attention to illicit small arms, we must also be resolute in our commitment to regulate the illicit proliferation of ammunition. This is of prime concern to Jamaica. A gun without ammunition is merely a mechanical contraption, a device that is practically useless. So all efforts to curb, regulate or stem the flow of illegal small arms and light weapons must be accompanied by similar, multiple efforts to effectively regulate the illegal flow of ammunition.

As a member of the Peacebuilding Commission, Jamaica is fully aware of the arduous task faced by the Commission in restoring and maintaining stability in post-conflict situations. The issue of small arms and light weapons is relevant to the work of the Commission, as the levels of illegal weapons circulating in the countries concerned are usually higher at the end of a conflict. In that regard, we support the view that the strategic frameworks developed by the Commission could benefit from coordination with existing instruments such as the Programme of Action and the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and also with the work done in other forums to curb the proliferation of illicit arms. The Jamaican delegation certainly looks forward to supporting efforts to that end as the Commission continues to develop the tools necessary to assist in facilitating total recovery from conflict and in achieving sustainable development in all countries faced with such situations, in particular those countries currently on its agenda.

Finally, Jamaica is currently reviewing the recommendations offered by the Secretary-General in his report on small arms and will express its views in the upcoming Biennial Meeting and in other pertinent forums.

Before concluding, I think it is incumbent on Jamaica to express its appreciation and commendation to you, Sir, for your able stewardship of the Council during this month. We wish you all the best in the last few hours of your presidency.

**The President**: Thank you very much. Those hours seem to be growing longer and longer.

I now give the floor to the representative of Uganda.

**Mr. Butagira** (Uganda): First of all, I should like to thank you, Mr. President, for organizing this debate, which has enabled non-members of the Security Council to participate.

In most parts of Africa and, indeed, of the world, the AK-47 rifle has become a menace. Lives have been destroyed, livelihoods disrupted and many people herded into camps for refugees and internally displaced persons as a result of use of that weapon. It has been used by gangsters, robbers and rebels.

Even in some developed countries where the bearing of arms is a constitutionally guaranteed right, easy access to small arms has resulted in many deaths. In some communities, such as that of the Karamojongs of north-eastern Uganda, the possession of firearms is seen as a protection measure, mainly against cattle rustlers from other communities. Those weapons have also been used to carry out raids to capture cattle. All the scenarios that I have described are alarming. Something must be done.

First, the root causes of the proliferation of small arms in illegal hands must be addressed. Poverty is sometimes at the centre of the matter, and measures to eradicate poverty must be put in place.

Secondly, the law and order regime must be strengthened, including through the provision of efficient courts and law enforcement agencies, to obviate the need to defend oneself.

Thirdly, incentives have to be put in place to encourage the voluntary surrender of arms. For example, in the Karamoja area of Uganda, such incentives have included the setting up of business enterprises and the provision to communities of ox ploughs and seeds for planting, as well as measures such as the provision of water to herdsmen to enable them to live a settled life. The Government of Uganda has put in place a programme known as the Karamoja Integrated Disarmament and Development Programme, which includes some of the measures that I have outlined. We call on the international community to support this Programme.

What else has Uganda done? We have put in place a national action plan on small arms and light weapons, which was adopted in June 2004. It is a five-year plan focusing on the strategic themes of control, reduction and prevention, setting out a framework for action at the national level. A functional analysis of the Uganda plan on small arms and light weapons was carried out in September 2007 by a consultancy commissioned by the Regional Centre on Small Arms and Light Weapons in the Great Lakes Region, the Horn of Africa and Bordering States with a view to rationalizing the functioning of the national plan and streamlining its organization, structure and staffing. The report setting out the analysis has already been released and outlines the challenges at hand.

The key objective in developing a comprehensive national policy was to address the full spectrum of issues related to small arms and light weapons and to provide a basis for the review of national legislation, regulations and administrative procedures governing small arms and light weapons. A legal drafting committee, comprising legal experts, has since embarked on the drafting of the bill and the policy, which, upon completion, will be presented to the Minister of Internal Affairs for submission to the Cabinet. It is on the basis of that policy that the review of the Firearms Act and other relevant laws will be carried out.

I now turn to the issue of stockpile management, which involves the marking, collection and destruction of illicit, surplus, obsolete and unserviceable small arms and light weapons. It remains an obligation of States parties to the Nairobi Declaration and the Nairobi Protocol within the region to mark their weapons by the end of December 2008. So far, the Uganda Police Force and the Uganda People's Defence Forces have started to mark their weapons under State control, including those for licensed civilians.

During May and June 2006, a major destruction exercise was coordinated under the national plan in which more than 57,000 small arms and light weapons were melted down at Steel Rolling Mills in the town known as Jinja. It was billed as the largest single small arms destruction effort in Africa. A second round of destroying small arms and light weapons was carried out on 25 July 2007, and more than 237 tons of such weapons had been destroyed by November of that year. In all these endeavours, financial and logistical support was provided by the United Nations Development Programme and the United States State Department, with Saferworld extending technical assistance.

Before I conclude, I want to bring a disturbing piece of information to the attention of the Council. It has been reported in some international media that there is credible evidence that some peacekeepers of the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo have been giving weapons to illegal militias in exchange for gold and ivory. Among those militias is the notorious Uganda rebel group known as Allied Democratic Forces. Obviously, Uganda is concerned. A thorough investigation should be carried out. We also call on MONUC to undertake robust action to disarm all negative forces on the soil of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which pose a threat to peace and stability in neighbouring countries.

**The President**: I now call on the representative of Uruguay.

**Mr. Álvarez** (Uruguay) (*spoke in Spanish*): At the outset, I should like to congratulate you, Mr. President, for the initiative to hold an open debate, as the delegation of South Africa has done on previous occasions. As stated by the delegation of Uruguay during the most recent open Security Council debate on this item (see S/PV.5390), in March 2006, we encourage the holding of such debates, since they are one of the Council's main mechanisms for improving

its interaction with the General Assembly and other organs of the system.

However, we continue to regret the fact that the item related to the Security Council's working methods has, to a certain extent, been postponed and unfairly linked to resolving the more politically complex issue of increasing the number of Council members. That has somehow prevented us from continuing to implement, through various mechanisms, means of improving the Council's working methods in a clear and defined manner.

The delegation of Uruguay notes that the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/258) updates and summarizes the information related to small arms in all their aspects and once again alerts the entire international community to the harmful effects of illicit small arms on security, human rights and the social and economic development of States. Uruguay fully agrees that studying the phenomenon of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons is not limited to security issues, but includes other, broader subjects related to human rights and development.

As shown in the Secretary-General's report, small arms continue to be the weapons most used in conflicts, particularly in those going on at present, especially those which continue to be considered by the Security Council. Once again, it is noted with concern that the majority of these weapons are in the hands of civilians, in much larger quantities than those available to armies, police and national armed groups. That is why, in the opinion of the Government of Uruguay, one of the main problems that the international community must face is the civilian population's access to such weapons.

The Uruguayan Government has made great efforts to adapt its policies and legislation to international and regional instruments related to the illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. Currently, Uruguay has a body of laws, standards and administrative procedures that are related to small arms and light weapons in areas such as production, export, import, transit and retransfer. Uruguay is also party to all international instruments in this area that are identified in the Secretary-General's report.

With regard to the most recent steps taken by our country, I can report that, by Law 18.233 of 11 December 2007, Uruguay ratified the Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. That instrument, which is a protocol to the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime — the Palermo Convention — establishes the obligation to draw up standards for marking in order to identify and track firearms.

Therefore, and in conformity with that Protocol, in 2007 the Interior Ministry of Uruguay approved a circular that requires that all fire rms and ammunition imported into the country, as well as small arms and light weapons destined for use by the armed forces, the national police and other authorized official institutions, be marked. According to the INTERPOL database, in Uruguay there is no illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. Nor are they currently any national firearms manufacturers in Uruguay.

Nevertheless, the Government of Uruguay has begun campaigns to destroy small arms and light weapons that are not duly registered or that have been confiscated because they have been traced back to illegal activities. Thus, in the period from 1998 to 2008, Uruguay, through its competent bodies and in close cooperation with the United Nations, destroyed more than 35,000 illegal weapons.

The delegation of Uruguay would like to express its support for the recommendations of the Secretary-General, especially those calling for the unconditional application of all Security Council resolutions concerning sanctions, including those that impose arms embargoes, in order to effectively control the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in conflict situations.

**The President**: I now give the floor to the representative of Lesotho.

**Mr. Maema** (Lesotho): At the outset, let me say how pleased I am to participate in this open debate on the subject of small arms under your presidency, Sir. We look forward to a successful and fruitful conclusion of the debate under your able leadership. I also wish to thank, through you, Ms. Hannelore Hoppe for her informative and detailed presentation of the report of the Secretary-General.

My delegation considers this debate an excellent opportunity for the Security Council to complement the work of the General Assembly aimed at tackling the issue of illegal small arms. We are elated that this debate comes on the eve of the Third Biennial Meeting

of States on the 2001 Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. The Meeting will focus on, among other things, illicit brokering, stockpile management and surplus destruction, as well as on the implementation of the International Tracing Instrument. In our view, some of the observations contained in the report of the Secretary-General on those pertinent issues, as well as his analysis of the relevant multilateral instruments, provide Member States with some food for thought as they prepare for Third Biennial Meeting.

It is an undisputable fact that excessive accumulation and uncontrolled spread of small arms and light weapons pose a significant threat to international peace and security, human rights and to social development in many countries. It is also a hard fact that in Africa — a continent that continues to be engulfed by internal armed conflicts — these weapons, which are easily accessible, cause untold humanitarian suffering. A close link between illicit transfers and trade in small arms and light weapons, terrorism and organized crime is also well acknowledged.

Yet there are still no accurate figures for the number of small arms and light weapons currently in circulation globally, as highlighted in the report of the Secretary-General. We share the view expressed in the report that Security Council embargoes, if well enforced by States, can have a destabilizing effect on the circulation of illegal small arms and light weapons. We therefore encourage the Council, as one of the relevant actors in the fight against illicit transfers of small arms, to continue to improve the enforcement of the arms embargoes.

Our general view is that the United Nations Member States, at large, still have to garner the necessary political will to be able to effectively tackle illicit trade in small arms in all its aspects. Since the 2001 Programme of Action remains the main reference that regulates the United Nations in that area, we wish to reiterate our firm commitment to its full implementation. Nonetheless, the fact remains that its effective implementation is a challenging task for those countries, like Lesotho, that have the political will but do not have sufficient resources — hence our repeated pleas for technical and financial assistance to those States in need to enable them to implement the provisions of the Programme of Action.

Lesotho remains committed to regional and global efforts aimed at addressing the problems related to illicit trade in small arms. To that end, we are committed to the full implementation of these instruments, to which Lesotho is a party: the 2001 South African Development Community Protocol on Control of Firearms, Ammunition and other related materials; and the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime and its supplementing Protocol against the Illicit Manufacturing of and Trafficking in Firearms, Their Parts and Components and Ammunition. Lesotho also fully subscribes to the 2000 Bamako Declaration on an African Common Position on the Illicit Proliferation, Circulation and Trafficking of Small Arms and Light Weapons, of the Organization of African Unity.

The Government of Lesotho has made significant strides on the ground regarding the reduction of the number of small arms held by official institutions, as well as in the collection and destruction of illegal small arms. In that regard, we express our gratitude to our partners for their assistance.

In conclusion, we commend you, Mr. President, for your able leadership under your presidency, which ends today.

**The President**: I now call on the representative of Colombia.

**Mr. Montoya** (Colombia) (*spoke in Spanish*): First allow me, Mr. President, to congratulate you on behalf of my delegation for your work in the presidency of the Security Council during the month of April and to thank you for convening this open debate. We also wish to express our gratitude to Ms. Hannelore Hoppe for her presentation at the beginning of the meeting, as well as to the Secretary-General for the preparation of the report that has served as the basis for the debate.

Seven years after the United Nations Conference on Small Arms and Light Weapons and almost nine years after the Security Council first debated this matter, the diversion of small arms and light weapons to illicit trade continues to be a threat to peace and security. Its devastating effects continue.

According to the 2007 Small Arms Survey, more than 875 million small arms and light weapons are in circulation today. It is estimated that eight million arms of this type enter the market each year. The

consequences in terms of loss of human lives have been worse than those caused by nuclear weapons. Given the existing stockpiles, small arms and light weapons truly are weapons of mass destruction. Nevertheless, the level of commitment to address their illicit trade has been much less than that devoted to the problem of nuclear, chemical or biological weapons. Greater decisiveness is required in acting and moving forward towards universal and legally binding instruments that effectively address that phenomenon.

Meanwhile, it is necessary to use all the tools available to the international community, which requires the will and resolve to fully implement existing legislation and international instruments on the matter. The Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects is one such instrument. It offers precise recommendations for progress in the fight against the scourge. We are confident that the Biennial Meeting of States, to be held in July within the framework of the Programme of Action, will lead to substantive progress and concrete results. We will work tirelessly towards that end. The Biennial Meeting is an opportunity to strengthen the Programme of Action and to promote its proper implementation at the global, regional and national levels.

Colombia will have the honour to be a Vice-Chair of the Meeting and will facilitate the segment on cooperation and international assistance. Additionally, Colombia will host the Latin American and Caribbean meeting aimed at outlining a regional position in preparation for the Biennial Meeting. All States must offer their committed support to the process. In that context, identifying international cooperation and assistance measures is of particular importance. Such issues as national capacity-building, the training of police and customs officers, the rapid and timely exchange of information, and support for prevention campaigns must be given priority.

The report of the Secretary-General submitted to the Council today contains various relevant recommendations that once again put the issue of small arms and light weapons, as well as the actions that must be carried out to address the problem, into perspective.

My delegation agrees with the emphasis placed on the first recommendation on the need for States to enhance their efforts to collect, maintain and share data on small arms and ammunition. Government transparency in that area is critical in order to fill the gaps in the implementation of current international instruments. In that regard, the issue of ammunition must be addressed as an element inseparable from the problem of small arms and light weapons. Any effort on the latter will be inoperative if the supply of ammunition is not effectively controlled.

The development of quantitative indicators in the area of small arms, referred to in the second recommendation, would also be a step forward in the right direction. Such indicators should be limited exclusively to small arms and light weapons. In particular, the development of an arms-stock baseline could allow for a genuine and reliable assessment of the magnitude of the problem. On the other hand, it is true that the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons can be related to other factors, such as security, violence, crime, trade, human rights and even development, among others, as suggested in the third recommendation of the report. Nevertheless, the existence of such a broad spectrum of factors should not distract us from the concrete actions that must be taken to handle that phenomenon — in other words, the specific measures that must be taken to control the trade in small arms and light weapons.

It would also be useful to understand in greater depth the scope of the recommendation included in the report on the subject of cooperation between the Peacebuilding Commission, the Office for Disarmament Affairs and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Children and Armed Conflict. No explanation is given in the recommendation of either the objectives or the areas of that cooperation.

The issue under discussion is of particular relevance to Colombia. My country has suffered more than most from the consequences of the illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons. However, it would not be appropriate to frame the problem as if some countries have been more victimized than others. That would not be within the constructive spirit of joint action that characterizes our Organization. All States have a responsibility in the face of that illicit trade. Collective commitment and genuine cooperation, including regional and bilateral cooperation, are needed to confront it.

A clear and firm political signal from the Council on the various aspects of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons would be in harmony with the need to provide decisive support for the tasks of the General Assembly and to strengthen the interaction between our two bodies within their respective mandates. It would also be a positive contribution to the main role that falls to States in the fight against such illicit trade, within the framework of shared responsibility. Only with such an approach can more effective cooperation and international assistance mechanisms be developed and more dynamic action developed to rid the world of that scourge.

**The President**: I give the floor to the representative of the Syrian Arab Republic.

**Mr. Hallak** (Syrian Arab Republic) (*spoke in Arabic*): At the outset, allow me to congratulate you, Sir, on your outstanding presidency of the Security Council this month. We also thank you for convening this important debate on small arms.

The Secretary-General has submitted a report on small arms that contains important information on the various aspects of the problem throughout the world. The report also identifies the different international instruments that allow us to stem the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, including the United Nations Programme of Action to Prevent, Combat and Eradicate the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. In that respect, my delegation appeals to all to make a firm commitment fully and optimally to implement the Programme of Action in order to curb the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. My delegation believes that we must commit ourselves to that important instrument, which must enjoy international support. Such support will make the third Biennial Meeting, to be held in July, a success.

My country submitted its report on the Programme of Action at the United Nations Conference to Review the implementation of the Programme of Action on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons, held in new York in June and July 2006. We thereby affirmed our support for and cooperation with the international community through Governments, non-governmental organizations and civil society in combating the scourge of the uncontrolled proliferation, illicit trade and brokering of small arms and light weapons.

The danger posed by those weapons in the hands of gangsters and terrorists threatens societies at every level. My country, Syria, does not produce such weapons, yet it enjoys the right to maintain them for its own defence and for liberating its occupied land in the Golan, and for all the reasons previously cited. The Secretary-General's report insists on the fact that, while only about 30 countries produce small arms and light weapons, they manufacture approximately 8 million such weapons every year. It is to be noted that the 2006 report of the Stockholm International Peace Research Institute, which deals with issues of armament and disarmament, refers to the fact that the four major arms manufacturers of Israel exported weapons worth some $3.5 billion in 2006.

While the credibility of confidence-building measures in the field of conventional arms and adequate arms control must be ensured, it is unfortunate that Israel has not respected the deadline for a just and comprehensive peace in our region by withdrawing from all occupied territories to the 4 June 1967 lines in conformity with the terms of reference for peace known to the Security Council.

The situation in the Middle East could be the best possible example in this context. The Israeli occupation of Arab territories is directly supported by certain major States that are exporters of conventional weapons. Those very States, indeed, are engaged in joint projects with the Israeli military industry to perfect technologies for the manufacture of Israeli weapons and to open export markets for Israel. That is enough to encourage Israel to reject the hand of peace that the Arab States are extending. It also encourages Israel to continue to occupy Arab territories and to escalate tension and violence in the region.

For decades, Israel has practiced what it calls weapons diplomacy. That was stated explicitly in 1981 by Israel's then economic affairs minister, Yaakov Meridor. He said, "We are going to say to the Americans, 'Do not compete with us in South Africa; do not compete with us in the Caribbean or in any other country where you cannot operate in the open. Let us do it. You sell the ammunition and equipment by proxy. Israel will be your proxy'".

It is absolutely clear that the Israeli representative's statement during this Council meeting was not consistent with Israel's actions. Israel has been illegally trading in arms worldwide. That in fact fuels

international terrorism; it protects drug traffickers and secessionist movements and saps all international efforts in those areas.

**The President**: I call now on Mr. Daniel Prince, Chief of the Conventional Arms Branch of the Office for Disarmament Affairs, to respond to comments that have been made.

**Mr. Prins**: The Secretariat is encouraged by today's rich and constructive debate and by the Council's commitment to take further action in the field of small arms. The urgency of the issue was highlighted once again with the just-released news message from the World Food Programme (WFP) stating that in Darfur, in 2008 alone, 60 WFP trucks have been hijacked, with 39 trucks still missing – and, most horrifyingly, with 26 drivers unaccounted for. Small arms always play a central role as enablers of such violence.

For the Secretary-General's recommendations to be followed up, it will be important that all continue to pay close attention to the issue. It is up to Member States whether, for instance, they want to establish an ad hoc working group to examine those recommendations, as was suggested this morning, or to agree on a presidential statement, or to take other action. The debate shows clearly the importance of consistently including the small arms situation in almost any other debate the Council holds.

For its part, the Secretariat will work actively on integrated and coordinated measures stemming the excessive accumulation and universal availability of small arms.

**The President**: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 5.30 p.m.*

United Nations S/PV.5882

# Security Council

Sixty-third year

*Provisional*

## 5882nd meeting

Wednesday, 30 April 2008, 9:15 p.m.
New York

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *President*: | Mr. Kumalo | (South Africa) |
| *Members*: | Belgium | Mr. Verbeke |
| | Burkino Faso | Mr. Kafando |
| | China | Mr. Liu Zhenmin |
| | Costa Rica | Mr. Urbina |
| | Croatia | Mr. Vilović |
| | France | Mr. Ripert |
| | Indonesia | Mr. Kleib |
| | Italy | Mr. Spatafora |
| | Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | Mr. Dabbashi |
| | Panama | Mr. Suescum |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Kravchenko |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Quarrey |
| | United States of America | Mr. Wolff |
| | Viet Nam | Mr. Hoang Chi Trung |

## Agenda

Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan

Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan (S/2008/267)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-32360 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 9.15 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**Reports of the Secretary-General on the Sudan**

**Report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan (S/2008/267)**

**The President**: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/283, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by Belgium, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Italy, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2008/267, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the Sudan.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. If I hear no objection, I shall now put the draft resolution to the vote.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour*:

Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Indonesia, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Panama, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

**The President**: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1812 (2008).

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 9.20 p.m.*

United Nations S/PV.5883

# Security Council

Sixty-third year

*Provisional*

**5883**rd meeting

Wednesday, 30 April 2008, 9.20 p.m.

New York

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *President*: | Mr. Kumalo | (South Africa) |
| *Members*: | Belgium | Mr. Verbeke |
| | Burkina Faso | Mr. Kafando |
| | China | Mr. Liu Zhenmin |
| | Costa Rica | Mr. Urbina |
| | Croatia | Mr. Vilović |
| | France | Mr. Ripert |
| | Indonesia | Mr. Kleib |
| | Italy | Mr. Spatafora |
| | Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | Mr. Dabbashi |
| | Panama | Mr. Suescum |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Safronkov |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Quarrey |
| | United States of America | Mr. Wolff |
| | Viet Nam | Mr. Hoang Chi Trung |

## Agenda

The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia

Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (S/2008/226)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-32366 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 9.20 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation between Eritrea and Ethiopia**

**Special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (S/2008/226)**

**The President**: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/226, which contains the special report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in Ethiopia and Eritrea (UNMEE).

Following consultations among the members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

"The Security Council notes that the continuation of Eritrea's obstructions towards UNMEE has reached a level so as to undermine the basis of the Mission's mandate and has compelled UNMEE to temporarily relocate. The Security Council recalls its previous condemnation of Eritrea's lack of cooperation.

"The Security Council notes the underlying fundamental issues and stands ready to assist the parties to overcome the current stalemate, taking into account the interests and concerns of both parties.

"The Security Council will, in the light of consultations with the parties, decide on the terms of a future United Nations engagement and on the future of UNMEE.

"The Security Council stresses, in accordance with its repeated statements, that the primary responsibility for achieving a comprehensive and lasting settlement of the border dispute and normalizing their relations rests with the parties themselves.

"The Security Council urges both sides to show maximum restraint and to refrain from any threat or use of force against each other and calls upon the parties to address forthwith the unresolved issues in accordance with the commitments made in the Algiers Agreements."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under symbol S/PRST/2008/12.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 9.25 p.m.*

United Nations S/PV.5884

# Security Council

Sixty-third year

Provisional

**5884th meeting**

Wednesday, 30 April 2008, 10.25 p.m.
New York

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *President*: | Mr. Kumalo | (South Africa) |
| *Members*: | Belgium | Mr. Verbeke |
| | Burkina Faso | Mr. Kafando |
| | China | Mr. Liu Zhenmin |
| | Costa Rica | Mr. Urbina |
| | Croatia | Mr. Vilović |
| | France | Mr. Ripert |
| | Indonesia | Mr. Kleib |
| | Italy | Mr. Spatafora |
| | Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | Mr. Dabbashi |
| | Panama | Mr. Suescum |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Safronkov |
| | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | Mr. Quarrey |
| | United States of America | Mr. Wolff |
| | Viet Nam | Mr. Hoang Chi Trung |

## Agenda

The situation concerning Western Sahara

Report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara (S/2008/251)

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-32472 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 10.25 p.m.*

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation concerning Western Sahara**

**Report of the Secretary-General concerning Western Sahara (S/2008/251)**

**The President**: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of Spain, in which he requests to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

*At the invitation of the President, Mr. De Palacio España (Spain) took the seat reserved for him at the side of the Council Chamber.*

**The President**: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2008/284, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France, the Russian Federation, Spain, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the United States of America.

Members of the Council also have before them document S/2008/251, which contains the report of the Secretary-General on the situation concerning Western Sahara.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. Unless I hear any objection, I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements before the voting.

**Mr. Urbina** (Costa Rica) (*spoke in Spanish*): As you yourself have said, Sir, what we had in the consultation room was a preview. My delegation is eager that our discussion here today be set down in the official record. I would therefore beg the indulgence of delegations present to repeat and summarize what was said earlier.

I said at the outset that when Costa Rica presented its candidacy for Security Council membership to the Members of the Organization, we did so on the basis of a platform of clear and specific principles that we have always upheld. We presented ourselves as a country that was devoted to and concerned about respect for international law without restriction; it could not be otherwise for a country that has staked its security on multilateralism and international law for the past 60 years. We also presented ourselves as a country that defends and promotes respect for the human rights of all human beings without exception, double standards or politicization of the cause. That is our history as a State and those are the fundamental values that we wish to see strengthened in the Organization.

In our campaign, we also stressed our brief but notable record of promoting the need to reform the working methods of the Security Council. As early as 1997, a note from Ambassador Berrocal referred to the Council's working methods. Alongside other Members of the Organization, we formed the so-called small five group, in which we made proposals with a view to making the Council more efficient and to ensuring that its actions enjoyed greater legitimacy. We called for a more transparent and inclusive Council, and we continue to do so, repeatedly and vehemently.

No one will be surprised, therefore, that Costa Rica should feel obliged to express its concern at the manner in which the draft resolution on which we are about to vote was negotiated, or to convey our difficulty in understanding the absolute refusal to include elements that, in our view, should be an integral part of the draft resolution.

It is especially difficult for Costa Rica to understand the opposition to including a reference to the human rights component in the text of the draft resolution. During the negotiation process, we proposed two options for incorporating such a reference. Today, to our surprise, the representative of the Russian Federation threatened to exercise a

technical veto of any reference to human rights, despite the fact that the issue of human rights is the object of mutual accusations made by both parties, that it has been raised in consultations by various delegations, and that several references are made to it in the reports of the Secretary-General. In his most recent report, Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon himself refers to the United Nations duty to uphold human rights standards in all its operations, including in Western Sahara, and to the need to coordinate action in that sphere.

Costa Rica cannot understand the reasons that have been put forward for rejecting a specific reference to the framework of international law when we are calling on the parties to assume a realistic position in the negotiations, nor do we understand the fact that the Group of Friends should sideline the members of the Security Council in the preparation of the texts of draft resolutions and in the building of consensus. In this case, just a week ago the Group of Friends provided us with the text on which we are about to vote and in which my delegation continued to insist that some of its amendments be included.

Costa Rica believes that the Council should facilitate solutions to the international issues on its agenda. As we said in the debate on the Middle East, the Council should be part of the solution and not part of the problem. We should not come here to defend the interests of certain parties to a conflict or the particular interests of any delegation. Instead, we should promote just, equitable and lasting solutions to problems that touch on international peace and security.

If the Council is to be part of the solution in Western Sahara, it must be united. That is what we have worked to ensure and why we withdrew our proposed amendments to the text. We will continue clearly and decisively to advocate a political, just and lasting solution acceptable to all parties, as requested by resolutions 1754 (2007) and 1783 (2007). The solution to the issue of the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara should be sought in the framework of the ongoing negotiations between the parties, which should be based on the principles and provisions of international law, especially those that have governed the Organization's decolonization work, in particular resolutions 1513 (2003) and 1541 (2004), which provide for voluntary annexation to a State or the proclamation of independence as the logical outcome of the process of self-determination.

Costa Rica has worked constructively and demonstrated flexibility, creativity and, today, humility, despite the particular negotiating dynamic with which we were faced. Our proposals to improve the paragraphs on human rights and respect for international law were never reflected in the text or negotiated in consultations. The implications of such a negotiating process are many and do nothing to strengthen the Council's legitimacy and transparency. Progress may be slow, as they say, but we have expressed our concern, maintained our position in the negotiations and defended the ideas and principles that underpinned our campaign to obtain the seat we now occupy on the Council.

In our first proposed amendment, we suggested adding the expression "within the framework of international law" to paragraph 2, which would then read as follows:

> "Endorses the report's recommendation that realism, within the framework of international law, and a spirit of compromise by the parties are essential to maintain the momentum of the process of negotiations".

We also proposed an amendment to add a new operative paragraph that would have read:

> "Calls upon the parties to commit themselves to a continuous and constructive dialogue with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights and MINURSO with a view to ensuring respect for the human rights of the people of Western Sahara;".

We withdrew both of our proposed amendments with a view to strengthening consensus and as a demonstration of respect for those who listened when we wanted to present our points of view.

**Mr. Safronkov** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): I would like to express our surprise at the fact that in his statement the representative of Costa Rica — which normally has friendly relations with the Russian Federation — distorted the thrust of the discussion held in the framework of the consultations in the Security Council. Our Ambassador put forward arguments of a totally different nature with regard to the technical veto. They dealt with the situation of putting to the vote a draft resolution on which there was no agreement from our capital. I wish to add that

other delegations spoke against the inclusion of these amendments to the text of the resolution for the same reasons.

**The President**: I shall now make a statement in my national capacity before the vote.

The negotiating process on the draft resolution before us illustrates once again that the Group of Friends are not interested in genuinely negotiating with the Security Council on the text that they produced. Once the Group of Friends reach an agreement, they are adamant that "it is cast in stone" and would not change substantially. As has been our experience in this matter in the Council, the Group of Friends have once again failed to be receptive to any substantial changes to the text that was initially agreed to by the Friends. Unlike other Council outcomes, there was once again no real attempt to reach a compromise on the contentious paragraphs so that we could be assured of a balanced text. Through this process the Security Council, which bears the primary responsibility for the maintenance of international peace and security under the terms of the United Nations Charter, is undermined by a group of like-minded countries and individuals who chose to determine the fate of the people of Western Sahara.

On the text of the resolution, my delegation would like to point out the following points.

The word "realism" would be interpreted as implying that the Council endorses the view of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General on political reality and international legality. No State or individual can bestow upon itself the right to deny the right of self-determination to the people of Western Sahara. That interpretation could set a precedent that could be used in many other cases. Are we going to say to the people of Palestine that they should be realistic in that they cannot get their freedom because of the powerful State of Israel? Indeed, are we going to say to the people of Serbia that they must accept Kosovo as a reality because of what has happened? This attempt would set aside international law in favour of the principle that "might is right".

We maintain that "realism" in the text of the resolution is related to the negotiations and not to any outcome. Following the report of the Secretary-General, the resolution calls on both parties — the Frente POLISARIO and Morocco — to show realism and a spirit of compromise, as these are essential to maintain the momentum of the process of the negotiations.

The resolution welcomes Morocco's "serious and credible ... efforts to move the process towards resolution". The context and the relevance of retaining this phrase have changed. This phrase has, unfortunately, led to destructive ambiguity and has resulted in some unfortunately interpreting the Council's intention as favouring one proposal over the other.

My delegation reiterates our understanding, as a Council member that was part of the negotiations on the text of resolution 1754 (2007), that the text of the resolution is clear, that the Council takes note of both proposals and that the Council called on the parties to enter into negotiations based on both of these proposals. Any attempt to place one proposal above the other would undermine the negotiations process and would be counterproductive to the spirit of future negotiations based on these two proposals. The Council and the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General should remain objective without pre-empting any final status of the negotiations.

The sponsors have once again refused to include any mention of human rights in the draft resolution, despite the fact that the Secretary-General has continued to report on the human rights situation in Western Sahara. Additionally, both parties — Frente POLISARIO and Morocco — have raised human rights concerns in their recent letters to the Secretary-General.

My delegation finds it extremely curious that some Council members selectively are quick to pronounce on the human rights situations in countries that are not even on the agenda of the Security Council, such as Myanmar and Zimbabwe, but refuse to deal with human rights abuses in Western Sahara, which this Council has been faced with for decades. This double standard creates a clear impression to the international community that the Council simply does not care about the human rights of the people of Western Sahara.

The resolution does, however, call on the parties — Frente POLISARIO and Morocco — to continue where the negotiations began after the adoption of resolution 1754 (2007), on the basis of the two proposals. It is for that reason that, despite the serious concerns with the draft, my delegation will vote

in favour of the resolution in the hope that through the negotiating process and with the support of MINURSO the people of Western Sahara can one day achieve their right to self-determination.

I now resume my function as President of the Council.

A vote was taken by show of hands.

*In favour*:

Belgium, Burkina Faso, China, Costa Rica, Croatia, France, Indonesia, Italy, Libyan Arab Jamahiriya, Panama, Russian Federation, South Africa, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

**The President**: There were 15 votes in favour. The draft resolution has been adopted unanimously as resolution 1813 (2008).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements following the voting.

**Mr. Wolff** (United States of America): I had intended to focus my remarks on the issue before us, and will do so. But that does not mean we agree with either the interpretation of the process that led to this resolution or the representation of the arguments presented by Council members on the specific issues raised by both Ambassador Urbina and Ambassador Kumalo reflecting the substance of the issue. But let me focus on the issue as we see it before us.

The Western Sahara conflict has gone on too long, provoking tensions, causing human suffering and preventing progress towards regional integration in North Africa. I am sure that all of us around this table yearn for a mutually agreed political solution to this conflict. Four rounds of discussions in the framework of the latest settlement initiative have, however, confirmed the difficulty of arriving at such a solution, despite the seriousness, dedication and sincerity of the Secretary-General's Personal Envoy, Peter van Walsum.

In the absence of a settlement, my Government judges the mission of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara to be vital and is pleased that the Council has renewed its mandate for a full year; we appreciate the fact that it was done consensually.

It is our hope that this will permit the parties to engage in the search for a solution in a sustained, intensive and creative manner. To encourage them to do so, we intend to broaden our own engagement with them over the coming weeks and months. For our part, we agree with Mr. van Walsum's assessment that an independent Sahrawi State is not a realistic option for resolving the conflict and that genuine autonomy under Moroccan sovereignty is the only feasible solution. In our view, the focus of future negotiation rounds should therefore be on designing a mutually acceptable autonomy regime that is consistent with the aspirations of the people of the Western Sahara.

In that regard, Morocco has already produced a proposal that the Security Council has qualified as serious and credible, and we urge the POLISARIO to engage Morocco in negotiation of its details — or to submit a comprehensive autonomy proposal of its own.

**Mr. Ripert** (France) (*spoke in French*): With the adoption of resolutions 1754 (2007) and 1783 (2007), the international community unanimously welcomed the end of the stalemate on Western Sahara, with the commencement of negotiations without preconditions and in good faith. The lack of progress in the Manhasset negotiations undermines the search for a mutually acceptable, just and lasting political solution negotiated under United Nations auspices, allowing for the self-determination of the people of Western Sahara. The continuation of the status quo in Western Sahara is an obstacle to building an integrated, prosperous Maghreb and poses a threat to the stability of the entire region.

By resolutions 1754 (2007) and 1783 (2007), the Security Council unanimously welcomed the serious and credible Moroccan efforts to produce an autonomy plan for Western Sahara. That, of course, is not a sine qua non: the autonomy plan proposed by Morocco forms the basis for serious and constructive negotiation aimed at a negotiated settlement between the parties, with respect for the principle of self-determination, to which we are committed.

We have taken note with interest of the assessment of the Personal Envoy of the Secretary-General, which supplements the information set out in the report of the Secretary-General (S/2008/251). We pay tribute once again to Secretary-General and his Personal Envoy for their efforts to resolve the question of Western Sahara.

In adopting the present resolution, the Security Council calls upon the parties to display realism and a spirit of compromise so that the negotiations can move to a stage of greater intensity and substance. We hope that the Security Council and all Member States — in particular, neighbouring countries in the region — will remain ready to support the ongoing negotiations, as called for in resolutions 1754 (2007) and 1783 (2007) and in the present resolution.

**Mr. Kafando** (Burkina Faso) (*spoke in French*): As members know, the conflict in Western Sahara is of the greatest concern to my country — not solely because it is an African problem, but also because of the potential danger it poses every day, after more than 30 years of attempts to reach a compromise. In that regard, Burkina Faso has maintained a consistent position: to encourage the parties to persevere on the path of negotiations, because, in our view, only the parties concerned can resolve their differences — of course, with the support of the international community. We consider that the present resolution encourages the parties to pursue negotiations, which is why Burkina Faso has supported it: that consideration is of great importance to my country. In our view, it is of the utmost importance to send a signal of encouragement to the parties so that they will persevere in the negotiations in a spirit of good faith and dynamic compromise.

We respect the views of delegations that have expressed differing opinions, and we thank them for their understanding, which has enabled us to adopt the resolution unanimously. It is our hope that this new resolution, which renews the mandate of the United Nations Mission for the Referendum in Western Sahara, will contribute to progress in the negotiations that the parties have already begun, in particular with respect to the consideration of substantive issues.

**The President**: There are no further speakers on my list. Before adjourning the meeting, I should like, in my national capacity, to thank the Secretariat, the interpreters and the members of the Council, who have made this a very interesting month for the presidency. I thank them for their support.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 11 p.m.*

United Nations S/PV.5885

# Security Council

Sixty-third year

*Provisional*

**5885**th meeting

Friday, 2 May 2008, 12.05 p.m.

New York

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *President*: | Sir John Sawers | (United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland) |
| *Members*: | Belgium | Mr. Verbeke |
| | Burkina Faso | Mr. Koudougou |
| | China | Mr. Wang Guangya |
| | Costa Rica | Mr. Urbina |
| | Croatia | Mr. Vilović |
| | France | Mr. Lacroix |
| | Indonesia | Mr. Natalegawa |
| | Italy | Mr. Spatafora |
| | Libyan Arab Jamahiriya | Mr. Dabbashi |
| | Panama | Mr. Suescum |
| | Russian Federation | Mr. Safronkov |
| | South Africa | Mr. Sangqu |
| | United States of America | Mr. Khalilzad |
| | Viet Nam | Mr. Le Luong Minh |

## Agenda

The situation in Myanmar

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. The final text will be printed in the *Official Records of the Security Council*. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-154A.

08-32636 (E)

*The meeting was called to order at 12.05 p.m.*

**Expression of thanks to the retiring President**

**The President**: As this is the first meeting of the Security Council for the month of May 2008, I should like to take this opportunity to pay tribute, on behalf of the Council, to His Excellency Mr. Dumisani Kumalo, Permanent Representative of South Africa to the United Nations, for his service as President of the Security Council for the month of April 2008. I am sure I speak for all members of the Council in expressing deep appreciation to Ambassador Kumalo for the great diplomatic skill with which he conducted the Council's business last month.

**Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

**The situation in Myanmar**

**The President**: The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

After consultations among members of the Security Council, I have been authorized to make the following statement on behalf of the Council:

> "The Security Council reaffirms its statements of 11 October and 15 November 2007 and all the expectations expressed in those statements.
>
> "The Security Council takes note of the announcement by the Government of Myanmar of a referendum on a draft constitution in May 2008 and elections in 2010. It further notes the commitment by the Government of Myanmar to ensure that the referendum process will be free and fair. The Security Council underlines the need for the Government of Myanmar to establish the conditions and create an atmosphere conducive to an inclusive and credible process, including the full participation of all political actors and respect for fundamental political freedoms.
>
> "The Security Council reaffirms its unwavering support for the Secretary-General's good offices mission and expresses its appreciation for the work of his Special Adviser, Ibrahim Gambari. The Security Council encourages the Government of Myanmar and all parties concerned to cooperate fully with the United Nations.
>
> "The Security Council welcomes the important role that the ASEAN countries continue to play in supporting the United Nations good offices mission.
>
> "The Security Council affirms its commitment to the sovereignty and territorial integrity of Myanmar and, in that context, reiterates that the future of Myanmar lies in the hands of all of its people.
>
> "The Security Council remains seized of the matter."

This statement will be issued as a document of the Security Council under the symbol S/PRST/2008/13.

The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

*The meeting rose at 12.10 p.m.*